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DOUBLE-DEATH; or, THE SPY QUEEN OF WYOMING.

BY CAPT. FREDERICK WHITTAKER,

AUTHOR OF "THE RUSSIAN SPY," "THE RED RAJAH," "THE IRISH CAPTAIN," ETC., ETC.



DOUBLE-DEATH'S EYE TRAIL.

Double-Death:

OR,

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CHAPTER I.

DOUBLE-DEATH.

A FATAL, stricken field! A confused crowd of fugitives, huddled together, running across the fields, with a long, curving line of enemies shouting, firing into them in front and on both flanks, running to intercept them! A merciless slaughter! The massacre of Wyoming was begun.

On the one side half-armed farmers, boys of fifteen and gray-headed men, unused to war, after fighting nobly, against three times their number, were forced to flee. On the other, soldiers in the scarlet livery of King George, vengeful Tories in the dark green of Butler's Rangers, and a host of the red warriors of the forest, yelling like wolves for slaughter, drove the handful of patriots before them, cutting down the wounded, and scalping the dead without mercy.

Every now and then the poor, hunted handful of men would make a desperate stand, and the spitting red flashes of the rifles told that they had not given up tamely.

The stand only accelerated their ruin, as the ends of the long line of enemies curved in round them, and the fire became overpowering.

The sickening thud of bullets tearing through human flesh, the spouting blood, men dropping, groaning, to the earth to be scalped by the merciless foe, such was the fatal field of Wyoming.

There were two exceptions to the general panic of the American farmers, both of them mounted men.

The one wore the uniform of a Continental colonel, the other the white frock of Morgan's Rangers. The colonel, a large, elderly man, galloped up and down with his sword drawn, escaping death as by a miracle, encouraging the fugitives to rally and fall back in order.

The ranger, a small, dark man, retreated with the rest, but, while he retreated, fought all the while, in a style that denoted the possession of extraordinary coolness and courage.

He was armed with a double-barreled rifle, and seemed to be an excellent shot. He would gallop away ahead of the fugitives at full speed for a hundred yards or so, when he would halt, spring off his horse, kneel down so as to steady his aim, and fire rapidly, right and left, at the advancing foe.

Every time he fired two of the enemy fell, killed or wounded.

Then he would deliberately mount his horse, and coolly reload his rifle, riding at an easy canter the while, to repeat the operation a few minutes further on.

Every place that he came to, Indians and whites alike seemed to fear him.

The poor fugitives had a little rest whenever he halted, for the certainty of the man's shot seemed to awe the enemy, who invariably paused to fire at him, instead of rushing forward as before.

But hope and fear alike came to an end full soon.

The broad, beautiful Susquehanna, become a fearful barrier now, lay behind them, and down to the bank the poor fugitives were driven, their pursuers yelling for triumph.

It was at this bank that the massacre culminated.

Many poor creatures, who could not swim, turned desperately at bay, with gunstocks, knives and hatchets. Others plunged into the river, only to be shot in the water, or carried down the fierce current. The colonel seemed to lose all heart as he came there, and plunged his horse into the river to swim across.

The terrible rifleman alone tried to save his comrades.

Dashing full speed into the fight, wielding a tomahawk with a long handle, he beat back a crowd of soldiers and Indians, rushing to slaughter a defenseless old man, by the mere rush of his horse.

"To blazes wid ye, ye bloody thaves!" he yelled, with a marked Irish accent. "Here's the b'y to-kill, if ye dare! Whoop! Hurroo! Erin go bragh! Tim Murphy forever! Down with the Injuns!"

The enemy was beaten back for a space, and the rifleman turned to the old man.

"Get up behind me, daddy," he said, hurriedly. "I'll carry yez off, I'll go bail! Hurroo! Jump now!"

With an activity inspired by terror, the old man scrambled up behind him on the horse, and the ranger turned the animal.

It was a noble act in such danger. Alas, it was useless!

Two men, in the green uniform of the Tory Rangers, threw up their rifles at the same minute and fired at the daring stranger.

They missed him, but the old man uttered a shriek, and fell from the horse, dead.

The Irish ranger uttered a fierce oath, and raised his rifle.

"Now, may I never hear mass again, but I'll pay yez for that shot, ye murderin' spalpeens!" he said, vindictively.

A semicircle of foes, waiting to rush on him, stood, awed by the grim determination of his face, as he glanced through the sights of the rifle.

None knew whose death-warrant was signed. Crack! crack!

The reports were almost simultaneous, and the two men who had shot the gray-haired patriarch fell dead beside him, while the scout put spurs to his horse and broke through the circle, away from the river, bullets flying all round him.

"Catch Tim Murphy av ye can, ye dirty blackgaids!" he shouted, as he galloped away.

"I'm off for Philadelphia! Hurroo! Whoop!"

"Curses on the fellow! shoot him, some of you!" roared a red-faced British officer. "Follow him! The rest are all dead now. After him! Will you let one man defy you so long? Who is he?"

An old Indian chief looked up at the speaker, as if wondering at his ignorance.

"Maybe so we no follow, colonel," he said, gravely. "Dat man be DOUBLE-DEATH."

"And who's Double-Death?" demanded the English colonel, angrily.

"Great warrior," said the Indian, sententiously. "Fire all day, load up at night. Injun no good to stand 'em. See!"

He pointed to the daring scout who had pulled up at a little distance from the field, near the edge of the woods.

The bank of the river was covered with corpses, hideous with bloody heads, where the scalp-knife had done its horrid work. The crack of rifles was still heard, as a few Tories fired at the American colonel, who was swimming the river, further down, on horseback, the only fugitive now left alive.

The scout, defying pursuit, had halted, at the edge of the field, and was again off his horse, aiming with that deadly rifle.

Again came its double detonation, followed by the death-cries of two of the green-clothed Tories, against whom he seemed to be especially incensed. And then, with a cry of taunting derision, he turned and galloped into the woods, followed by a shower of bullets.

"By the Lord, he's a bold fellow, that Double-Death!" muttered the English colonel, admiringly.

And he turned away to follow the clouds of his men, who were sweeping down, intent on murder, to plunder the now defenseless valley of Wyoming.

Double-Death and the American colonel were the only survivors left of the garrison.

CHAPTER II.

CHARLOTTE LACY.

A YOUNG lady, small and frail-looking, but of extraordinary beauty, sat in the bay window of a handsome house, in Arch street, Philadelphia, looking down into the street, and talking to a stout gentleman with a resolute face, that denoted the possession of a high temper and strong passions. The stout gentleman was dressed in the dark velvet coat and generally elaborate get-up of an elderly dandy in those days. He seemed to be very obsequious in his demeanor to the young lady.

She, on her part, was a perfect cabinet picture for a fairy queen, with bright golden hair rolled away from her forehead, a few curls straying here and there down her snowy neck, the delicate silks and laces of her dainty dress set off by a perfect bed of flowers that filled the bay window.

Her blue eyes were remarkably bright and piercing, and her face had the assured firmness of outline of a woman of the world, with the peach-like bloom of a girl of eighteen.

"And so you say that your son is now on General Arnold's staff, Mr. Barbour?" she said, inquiringly.

"He is, madam," said the stout gentleman, wrathfully. "But he is no son of mine, madam. I disown him, as I do all Rebels. He left me in anger a year ago at Bemis's Heights, to join in the battle in which our sovereign lord, the king, suffered loss, through the incapacity of Burgoyne. They say he behaved well, madam—a son of John Barbour's could not be a coward, but I'll never forgive him for fighting against his king, madam, never!"

The lady smiled.

"Yes, you will, foolish man," she said, in a tone of authority; "you will forgive him and seek him out on the king's service, if I bid you, John Barbour. You forget that we are both secret agents, and we must do our duty to the king."

"If you order me, madam," said John Barbour, bowing low, "I must obey, but I see no need for it."

"Mr. Barbour, your head is thicker than I thought," said she, with a faint sneer. "Do you know whom I have been corresponding with

for so long, and influencing through my friend Maggie Shippen?"

"General Arnold," replied Barbour, gravely.

"Well, sir, you see it is important that I should find out how far my efforts have succeeded. You say your son is on Arnold's staff. He can give me all sorts of useful information, which I must have. He is young, and I—I am—well—not bad-looking. The general has succumbed to Maggie Shippen, and I can not get her to tell me every thing. I do believe she's in love with him, and turning Whig. I have taken a fancy to fascinate the aid-de-camp. I can turn a youth like that inside out in a very little time."

"Perhaps not, madam," said John Barbour, gravely.

"And why not?"

"The young fool is in love already."

"Ah! this grows interesting. With whom?"

"With a country girl, called Marian Neilson, who lived near us," said the stout gentleman.

"The boy always had low tastes. A simple country lass, with no two ideas in her head. But then he considers himself engaged, and he has a great deal of obstinacy. You'll find it hard to shake him, madam."

"So much the more amusement," she observed, gayly. "Positively, I must see this interesting son of yours, Mr. Barbour. Only twenty, you say, and engaged. Bah! I've broken many an engagement before this, with not half the cause he has to break this one. You must really hunt him up, Mr. Barbour. You're his father, and you know fathers ought to be forgiving—eh?"

"I can refuse you nothing, madam," said John Barbour, bowing. "Everard's my own boy after all, and they say he did behave uncommonly well at Saratoga. He ought to be on our side."

"Let us bring him there, Mr. Barbour," said the lady. "Twill be a good deed. Come, go and find him, and introduce him to me."

"I go, madam," said the stout gentleman.

"If you can redeem him, and make him a faithful subject of King George, I will be grateful to you forever."

And the stout gentleman left the room.

The lady stood gazing down into the street through the flowers, and murmured to herself:

"Little does he think that I have seen Everard already, and what is my motive in sending for him thus. Ah! Charlotte Lacy, in the days of your triumph, when English officers and generals knelt at your feet, and you laughed at them, little did you think that a boy like this was to take your fancy and send you crazy to be near him. But then he is so handsome, and he looks so melancholy and poor. He shall not be thrown away on that awkward country lass. I am rich and I will keep him from it. And he must be brought to our side and tell me all about this Arnold. Little do these honest fools think where the money comes from that that general spends so lavishly. Ha! they have met! I should know my young hero's face among a thousand."

From where she was, she could see Mr. Barbour talking to a slight young officer in Continental uniform, who was coming from the lower part of the city. Their colloquy seemed to be interesting, for they walked off arm in arm, in deep conversation.

Charlotte Lacy stamped her foot impatiently.

"Why doesn't he bring him in?" she said to herself. "Nay, then, I'll checkmate this Mr. Barbour. I'm not accustomed to be treated thus."

She rung the bell.

"My carriage immediately."

And the willful beauty, seemingly much excited, hurried down stairs, as the sound of wheels rumbled by the door.

CHAPTER III.

EVERARD.

JOHN BARBOUR and his son, the young officer whom Charlotte had seen from the window, were slowly walking along the outskirts of Philadelphia, by the river, conversing earnestly. They had been long separated, but it was evident that the reconciliation was complete, for the youth had been devotedly fond of his father, in spite of their disagreement in politics, and the father, hard and obstinate as he was, was still proud of his son.

"And so you were surprised to see me, lad," he said. "Where did you think I was, then?"

"In New York, of course, sir. I never expected to see you here, among the Rebels you hate so."

John Barbour gave a short, dry laugh.

"No more did I, boy, but necessity brought me here. I've gone into trade now, and it pays well to run blockades, I tell you."

"But how do you get away from here, sir?" asked the youth. "General Arnold issued an order, you know, some time since, forbidding all trade here."

"I know he did," said John Barbour, dryly, "but I was able to present certain irresistible arguments for my own exception to the order. Do you see that, Everard? Your general isn't such a stern moralist that he can afford to displease us."

And he exhibited to the eyes of the youth a paper, which read:

"Pass Mr. John Barbour, a good patriot, with all his goods, through our lines at all times, on the public service."

"BENEDICT ARNOLD, Major-General."

Everard handed the paper back to his father and walked silently on.

Presently he turned round and observed:

"And have you really changed your opinions, sir? You were a bitter Loyalist a year ago."

"Bah! what does the king care for me," said his father, carelessly. "Money is the thing nowadays. They want fresh beef in New York and they pay three prices for it. We want silks and laces and cutlery here and they have a glut of them. The French blockade New York, and the English blockade us. They spread a net with the meshes too large, and we run through. It pays us—you think your general a very pure patriot, Everard, hey, sir?"

"I think him a brave soldier," said Everard, proudly. "A brave soldier knows no dishonor."

John Barbour laughed a sneering, sarcastic laugh.

"Well, well, I'll not disillusionize you. Suppose I should tell you he was my partner in trade? What would you say to that?"

"I should think you were laughing at me," said Everard. "Do you think that I should be with him if I did not know he was the soul of honor?"

"I suppose not," said his father, curtly, and then he fell to musing.

"But you, sir," said Everard, presently, in a timid tone of voice; "I can not think that you have obtained that pass by fair means. I know you are not a good patriot."

"Well, what of it?" said Barbour, coolly. "You can't betray me, your own father. That's a stretch of patriotism I should hardly expect even from you."

"No, sir," said Everard, flushing painfully. "You know I can not betray you; but I have a right to ask that you do not make use of your safety on my account to harm my country."

John Barbour looked keenly at his son for a while, and then said:

"Well, I won't, if you give up Marian Neilson."

"What do you mean, sir?" asked Everard, in a vexed tone. "You were aware that I was engaged to that young lady a year ago, were you not?"

"Not with my consent, sir," said his father, sternly. "I never approved, nor never will approve, of such a low match. Come, sir, give her up, and I have a match for you worth a dozen—ay, fifty Marians. A lady of beauty, talent, and riches has taken a fancy to you, and wishes you to be presented to her. These boy and girl engagements are never kept, you know, and, besides, I never gave my consent."

"And I, sir," said Everard, firmly, "will never give up the engagement, not for all the beauty and wealth that—"

He was interrupted by the dashing past of an elegant phaeton with a pair of gray horses, which pulled up close to them, and from which the most beautiful lady he had ever seen was bowing to his father, like an old friend.

The recognition necessarily interrupted his thoughts, for John Barbour was executing a profound bow to the lady. Everard knew her by sight. She was a great friend of Miss Margaret Shippen, to whom General Arnold was then betrothed, and the young aid-de-camp had seen her often from the window of the office where he sat writing tedious reports, riding by in that self-same carriage.

"Mr. Barbour," said the sweet voice of the lady, "positively you must come with me into the carriage. I have ever so much to say to you."

"Indeed, madam," said John Barbour, "I shall be most happy."

"Nay, but you must introduce your friend, too," said the lady, with a sweet smile at Everard. "From his likeness I can make a shrewd guess who he is."

"My son Everard, madam. Everard, Miss Lacy," said John, bowing low, and in a few minutes Everard found himself seated in the luxurious phaeton, wondering at the strangeness of the whole meeting, while the lady was saying:

"Do you know, Mr. Barbour, that I have often wished to know you? I have seen you often on horseback, mounting guard, and I have heard much of you from my friend, General Arnold."

Everard blushed up. He was young and unused to society, and the frank ease of the lady's manner had a strong tinge of condescension which abashed him.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MILITARY GOVERNOR.

THE commander of the American forces at Philadelphia was returning from a ride in the suburbs of the city, followed by a single dragoon. The general looked stern and sour. His dark complexion and haughty features gave an ill-tempered expression to his face, and the pain he still suffered from the wound in his leg, re-

ceived at Saratoga, increased the fretfulness of his looks.

He was slowly riding back on the winding country road from Germantown, when he heard the gallop of a horse at some distance in the rear.

Looking round he saw the orderly similarly engaged, as if wishing to find out the cause of the sound.

Presently the distant figure of a horseman came in view round a turn in the road, and as soon as he saw them, the stranger began to wave his arms and shout at the top of his voice.

General Arnold halted and turned his horse. Even at that distance they could see that the stranger was a soldier, in the white frock of Morgan's Rangers.

"The man has news of some sort," he muttered. "What can have happened? He comes from the north-west. What's the matter?"

The stranger came closer and closer, and they could see that his horse was laboring fearfully, and gray with foam.

As if wishing to hurry the news, the general galloped back to meet him, and exclaimed when close by:

"Murphy, is that you? What's the matter?"

The stranger pulled up his horse, and the poor beast sunk to the earth at the same moment, as if utterly exhausted, the rider leaping off.

"Oh, glory be to God this day, general!" cried Tim Murphy, for it was none other. "Sure and I never thought to get the baste that far, so I didn't. And yer honor rimembers me, so ye do! 'Twas Tim Murphy that shot General Fraser at Bemis's Heights, sir, so 'twas. Oh, glory be to God, general! ye're a good sight for sore eyes, so ye are!"

Arnold smiled not unkindly on the eccentric rifleman, and asked:

"What brings you here, Tim? You were sent to Wilkesbarre with Colonel Butler. Has any thing happened?"

"Oh, musha, general! Has anything happened, indade? Murder's happened, sir, and bloody scalpin's. The Tories is up, and the Injuns is after them, general, and they've murdered ivery man, woman and child in the hull valley of Wyoming!"

"Good Heavens!" said Arnold, much moved; "you can't mean it, Tim? When did it happen, and how did you get away?"

"They come onto us yisterday, so they did, general, and av it hadn't been for Double-Death here"—patting the rifle affectionately—"it's meself who would have been lying with the rest there now. The colonel and meself we fit hard, but the bloody Tories was too strong, and we had to run. The colonel got away across the mountains, and, bedad, av he didn't get stopped by more of the divils, it's himself is safe now beyant them."

"And how long have you been riding?" queried the general.

"All night and all the mornin', general," said the scout. "The little horse had to do his best, and, bedad, I belave he's kilt. He's been ninety-five miles since noon yisterday."

Arnold sat on his horse, frowningly eying the ground and considering, while the Irish ranger tried to induce his exhausted animal to rise, and follow him.

"Ah! now, acushla, don't be lyin' there like a stuck pig, whin there's nothin' the matther wid ye, barrin' ye're tired. Get up and come into town, where ye shall have an iligant clane stable, and all the luxuries of the s'ason, so ye shall. That's it, alanah; git up on yer hunkies, and scramble up. Bedad, I won't ride ye another step till ye're well ag'in."

"Whose party has done this?" muttered the general, under his breath. "John Barbour must have known this was coming, and he never warned me. Now I must send some one to Washington to tell him this, and he may spoil all my fine plans."

He suddenly addressed the rifleman.

"Murphy," he said, "I must gallop back to town to send a messenger to General Washington. You lead your horse after us, and I'll have a fresh one at my head-quarters ready for you. Can you ride any further?"

Tim made a grimace.

"Av it's necessary," he said, pointedly. "But sure, general, ridin's a tinder subject wid me joost now. Av ye don't belave it, try ridin' a hunder miles at a stretch onst yerself."

"Well, it is necessary," said Arnold, sternly. "Be ready to take a fresh horse and depart when you reach my quarters."

And he turned his horse, and galloped away up the road to the city, leaving Tim to follow him.

"And, bedad, there goes a brave sodger, but a mortal hard general," said Double-Death, musingly. "He wouldn't give a man a chance to rest, av he was dyin'! Git up, Tim; come along, Mither Murphy. We'll rest some time, av it's only in the cowlid grave. Maybe ye'll see Masther Everard, the darlin', and he'll give ye time to slape."

CHAPTER V.

TERRIBLE NEWS.

"A LETTER for you, sir," said the orderly, on duty, as Everard stepped into his quarters late that afternoon. The young officer's eye-

were bright, and his cheek flushed with excitement. He had just returned from a visit to Charlotte Lacy.

He took the letter without looking particularly at it, and went up-stairs to his room, humming to himself, Ben Jonson's little carol:

"Drink to me only with thine eyes,

And I will pledge with mine."

"How beautiful she is, and how kind!" he muttered, to himself, as he fell into a fit of musing, altogether forgetting his letter. He was recalled to it by the sight of his general galloping into the garden of the old Penn Mansion, in which they were quartered, up the stately avenue of elms. The orderly stopped and presented him with a bundle of letters, and Everard remembered that it was mail-day from the North.

He looked down at his own letter, and started, blushing deeply.

"From her," he murmured; "and I had almost forgotten her. Everard Barbour, where is your honor gone? Only one sight of a lovely face and you have almost forgotten Marian. Dearest Marian!"

He kissed the letter and opened it. It was written in a pretty rounded hand that spoke a country schooling, very different from the running, pointed characters in which fashionable ladies were wont to write, and it was dated several weeks back.

It announced that the writer, Marian Neilson, had left her home near Saratoga to visit her aunt at Wilkesbarre, in the valley of Wyoming, Pennsylvania.

"And I do so hope, Everard," she concluded, "that you will be able to get the good General Arnold to let you come and see me now and then. Aunt Jane says it's only a three days' ride from Philadelphia, and—"

"General's compliments, Mr. Barbour, and he wishes to see you immediately, sir," said the voice of an orderly at the door, before he could read another word.

Everard started and followed him instantly, for he knew the impatient temper of his chief.

He found Arnold stumping up and down the great, gloomy room, looking out on the elms, which was his peculiar sanctum, and was at once greeted with the salutation:

"Ha! Mr. Barbour, is that you? Get ready to ride to Brunswick at once, sir, to General Washington's quarters. Have you a good horse?"

"Yes, sir," said Everard.

He had but received it an hour before as a present from his now—to all appearance—quite reconciled father.

"Don't spare it, sir! There's terrible news to take there. When you're ready, come back and report. Order out a troop-horse for a second man, who will accompany you. I expect him every moment."

Everard bowed and retired. He had no time to continue his letter, which he hastily thrust in his breast. He ran down-stairs, summoned his orderly, and had his horse got ready in short order. Then he went to his room and assumed his heaviest campaign dress for long-continued riding, a little curious all the time to know what the terrible news was, which he was expected to take.

In a quarter of an hour, booted and spurred, with his saber clattering at his heels, he stood in the general's room, ready to report. He beheld there a face and form familiar to him, as to every one who had fought on the field of Saratoga. It was the sinewy frame and dark, keen face, with piercing black eyes, of Timothy Murphy, the ranger, better known as Double-Death, the Scout. He and Everard had become fast friends on that battle-field a year before, and the lad was glad to see him.

Arnold cut short any greetings in his stern, imperious manner.

"Mr. Barbour, there's no time to fool. This is your companion, the only man left out of the garrison of Wilkesbarre. Tell General Washington that the Tories and Indians have made a descent from Canada with the men of the Six Nations, and have massacred every man, woman and child in the whole valley of Wyoming."

Everard started back with a clash, entirely forgetful of military etiquette in his surprise and horror.

"Wyoming!" he ejaculated, faintly. "All killed! Don't say so, general. Don't say so. Oh! my God! Marian's killed."

"What's the matter, Mr. Barbour?" asked the general, haughtily. "What ails you, sir?"

"My God, general, not five minutes before you came in, I received a letter from my own betrothed wife, telling me that she had gone on a visit to her aunt in Wilkesbarre. And now I shall never see her more. The Indians have scalped her beyond a peradventure."

"I am sorry for it, Mr. Barbour," said Arnold, not unkindly, "but these things are the rule of war."

"And av ye mane a young lady wid black hair, as used to live at Mither Neilson's, at Bemis's Heights," said Tim Murphy, suddenly, "she ain't kilt yet or wasn't when I left the place. I'll tell yez as we go, liftinant."

And Everard and Double-Death left the room together.

CHAPTER VI.
WYOMING.

In the month of September, 1778, a party of five horsemen were riding slowly along a rough country road in the midst of a singular scene. Around them spread a country that nature had made the very home of beauty. The winding Susquehanna pursued its tranquil course through an expanse of diversified hill and dale, sprinkled with noble clumps of trees, that gave it the appearance of a park. Wild vines, loaded with luscious purple grapes, hung in masses from the boughs of oak, elm and sycamore; while the borders of the river were planted with rows of the same tree in shady luxuriance. The pipe of the quail could be heard in the open meadows among the fields of yellow wheat, and numerous deer were grazing here and there, nibbling the yellow ears as if they were accustomed to it. Now and then the deep, hollow drumming of the ruffed grouse echoed from the dense woods, or a flock of wild ducks would come whirling up from a silent eddy of the river, startled at the approach of horsemen.

But in all the landscape, except that little party, there was no token of human habitation, except those ghastly remains, left by fire and sword, which told of the fierce storm of war that had passed over the peaceful valley of Wyoming two short months before. The bare and blackened chimneys stood up here and there, ghosts of departed homes. The fences were prostrate, or left in heaps of ashes, where the rails had been used for firewood, and every now and then the horses of the travelers would shy violently at the sight of the bleaching bones of a human skeleton, the body parched and blackened by the fierce heat of the summer and the dry, still air of early fall.

The travelers were all well mounted and armed, as was necessary in the then state of the stricken vale of Wyoming. Four of them wore the uniform of Morgan's riflemen, a white frock or hunting-shirt, fringed and ornamented, with fur caps and buckskin leggings. The leader was a young officer of Continental dragoons. He rode a magnificent black horse, nearly thoroughbred, and appeared to be subject to great anxiety, for his eager glance scanned every thicket ahead, and his face had a worried, unhappy look about it.

Every now and then he would turn round to speak to the leading rifleman, a small, wiry-looking man, with a dark, shrewd face and intensely black eyes, who was noticeable among the rest for carrying a double-barreled rifle, a very rare thing in those days.

"Murphy," said the young officer, at last, "do you think that the female prisoners were spared after they were carried off?"

He spoke as if he longed to hear a favorable answer, while dreading the reverse.

"Av coorse they were," said Tim Murphy. "Didn't the Injun chief stop the devils from killin' after they'd been at it for two hours, bedad? But, anyway, I saw the young lady alive after that, and heard that they were going to take her off. Ould Queen Esther it was that tuk pity on her—and she the worst devil of them all, for that matter, for she bate out the brains of twenty men, standin' tied together around a rock, one afther the other—but she seemed to take a fancy to the child as she stood there, so brave and innocent-like, and tuk her into her own tint, 'to be her daughter,' she said."

"And you say this Queen Esther's village lies not far from here?" said the young officer.

"It lies over beyant thim hills," said the rifleman, pointing to the west, "and we can get there befor dark, if we ride fast. Not that I mane to say that we'd better do it, Misther Barbour, for the ould witch isn't what ye call a nice person to visit, widout a hundred or so of good boys at yer back. Bedad, av she knew that Double-Death was here, wid only five others, it's herself that would be the glad woman this day, 'hopin' to light an illigant little fire on Mr. Murphy's bare skin, av she could only catch him. But, Misthur Murphy has a likin' to light his own fires, bedad, and he's goin' to—halt!"

He suddenly broke off from his rambling speech, and threw up his rifle to his shoulder, taking aim at a thicket at the roadside. In a moment more he would have fired, when the flash of three rifles simultaneously from the same thicket anticipated him, and three of the horses dropped to earth together, one of them his own. Instantly the adroit rifleman had his feet out of the stirrups, and was standing erect, aiming at the same place, as three Indian warriors, covered with paint and bedizened with feathers, sprung out of the cover, tomahawk in hand, to consummate the surprise. They little knew with whom they had to deal. As coolly as if at a pigeon-shooting match, Tim Murphy raised his rifle again, and fired right and left at the yelling warriors, within ten feet of him, bringing two of them down at once. The third, as if amazed at the sight of two shots coming from the same man without reloading, hesitated a moment, and that moment was fatal to him. It enabled Everard Barbour, who had been too flurried by the surprise to be fully conscious at first, to level the pistol he had drawn from his holster at the broad breast of the sav-

age warrior, and fire into him, almost touching him. Before Everard's horse had fairly recovered from the shock of seeing its companions fall, the Irish rifleman had leaped forward and scalped all three of the Indians, with a dexterity and coolness that told of long practice, and the whole affair was over.

Then it was found that one of the American riflemen was mortally wounded, the same shot that had felled his horse having passed through his thigh, and cut the femoral artery, from which the blood was welling like the stream from a pump: the other lay half under his horse, which was still struggling violently in the agonies of death; and the last one seemed to be too much unnerved at the suddenness of the occurrence to do any thing but try to restrain his frightened animal from running away.

Tim Murphy said not a word till he had reloaded his rifle. Then he stooped down and took up the weapons of the dead Indians, emptied their bullets into his own bullet-pouch, and replenished his powder-horn from theirs. He rose and scanned the valley all round him with the piercing glance of a veteran scout, and observed:

"Liftinant, there's lashin's of the devils around here, and Tim Murphy's nothing but a goney that he didn't see them afore."

Everard was already on his feet by the wounded rifleman, trying in vain to stanch the welling flood of crimson that was fast draining the man's life. But, as Murphy spoke, the poor fellow lapsed into insensibility, and in a very few seconds after ceased to breathe, while the unwounded man was trying to extricate his other comrade from the crushing weight of the dying horse. Everard rose sadly up from his slain follower's side, and said:

"I fear you're right, Murphy. Three of them would never have dared to attack five of us, if they had not plenty of help nigh at hand. I see no way for us to do but to retreat and await the coming of Colonel Butler's expedition. We have lost our horses, and have not enough left to go on with in safety. And yet I can not go back while there is a chance to save her. What shall we do?"

Murphy considered a moment, and then said, slowly:

"There's two horses left, devil a lie in it. An' there's four men to ride on 'em—two too many. L'ave me here, liftinant, wid Sam Noble there, and you and the other man go back and hurry up the boys. We'll wait for yez, and find out all about the Injun camp before the colonel gets up."

Everard hesitated for several minutes. Then he appeared to take his resolution.

"Martin Glover," he said, addressing the rifleman who had shown the least courage of any in the party, "you and Sam Noble will ride back at speed to Colonel Butler. Sam, take my horse. Tell him that there are Indians in the valley, and that I remain here with Murphy to find out their haunts. And here, Sam, give me your cap and hunting-shirt, and take my coat and helmet. They're not fit for this kind of work."

He spoke with the air of authority that compelled acquiescence and the men were not sorry to obey. Their adventure, and the terrible stories current about the valley, had not conspired to encourage them, and they knew that about twenty miles behind a body of their comrades were coming up to the rescue, to revenge the slaughter of Wyoming. The change of garments was quickly effected therefore, and inside of ten minutes Everard, transformed into a rifleman, was watching his two men galloping away on the back track.

"Faith, liftinant," observed Tim Murphy, dryly, "thim fellows 'll not let the grass grow under their feet till they see the colonel. It's little use they'd be here, an' we two can prowl about, an' nobody be the wiser. Now, sur, av it's pl'asing to ye, we'd better be at work, for the shots 'll maybe bring ould Queen Esther and all her tribe out afther us. We must get these fellows into the place they came from, and I'ave poor Jimmy Burke out beyant, so they may think we're all kilt or run away."

The advice seemed sensible, and they dragged the bodies of the Indians back into the thicket from whence they had first fired, judging rightly that there would be no more in that quarter, at least. The body of the slain rifleman was left where it fell, a ghastly necessity for the present, but they did not dare to take it away or bury it. Everard selected the best of the rifles, which was that carried by one of the Indians, a splendidly ornamented piece, evidently of English manufacture, and filled his bullet-pouch and powder-horn before setting out. Tim Murphy shook his head angrily as he looked at the rifle.

"It's the bloody British Governor's present," he said. "He gives them to the chiefs who bring in most scalps, and hires the red thaves to murder his own color. Bedad, maybe he won't like to get a bullet sent into his fri'nds from his own gun. And now, liftinant, let's be off, av it's pl'asin' to ye!"

Although perfectly respectful in his manner, from the moment they were left alone in the wilderness, Murphy unconsciously took the lead

in their subsequent proceedings, and Everard submitted, in light of his experience. They became equal comrades, instead of officer and private, and left the spot together on foot, each carrying a spare rifle, besides his own particular piece.

They passed through the thicket from which they were shot at, in cautious silence, keeping in the middle of the wood and avoiding to show themselves. All was quiet around them, however, save for the piping of the quail and the occasional whirr of the pheasant from the woods beyond. Everard was startled at every sound, and looked nervously round, expecting more Indians at every turn; but Tim reassured him with one of his simple, common sense remarks, that explained the case at once, saying:

"Sorra one o' them's here, liftinant. Trust the birds and bastes to hear them when they come. When ye don't hear a sound in the woods, look out; but as long as the little squirrels play about over beyant, there's no Injuns near."

And the ranger stepped on fearlessly and rapidly through the woods, glancing out between the trees to the open ground whenever they approached it.

Everard followed, becoming more used to his position, which was entirely novel, the longer he walked, and feeling a keen sense of pleasurable excitement in spite of the danger, in the peculiar atmosphere of bush-fighting, which he now tried for the first time. Indeed, no one who has not tried it, can realize the sense of freedom and independence peculiar to a man in the woods in an enemy's country, where his life depends on his acuteness. It resembles the passion for hunting, which causes so many men to forsake home comforts, and cheerfully confront cold and hunger to enjoy it; but with the additional excitement that your game will probably shoot back.

Everard felt, moreover, that his companion was an adept in woodcraft and Indian warfare, and trusted entirely to his abilities, and he was not wrong. Tim Murphy, under his Indian sobriquet of "Double-Death," was celebrated among the Indians far and wide, and much dreaded.

The two comrades thus continued on their way through the belt of woods, which proved to be about a mile in length, and then saw before them an open field of wheat, fully exposed to view on all sides, at the opposite margin of which again extended the woods that clothed the edge of the valley to the west. Beyond these woods lay the camp of the Indian queen, known to the whites as Queen Esther, whose band had been prominent in the July massacre.

Both men instinctively uttered a low exclamation as they looked out upon the fields, for there, coming leisurely along toward the very place they were posted, was a party of eight or nine Indians.

CHAPTER VII.

HIDE AND SEEK.

MURPHY was the first to catch sight of them, and he immediately drew back behind a tree, motioning to Everard to do the same. The tree behind which they shrunk happened to be very large, and had a deep cavernous hole on one side. Without any hesitation, Tim entered the hollow, and Everard followed him, when both prepared themselves for a desperate defense if they were discovered, but in the full expectation of remaining unseen. Tim whispered to Everard that he was certain the savages had not caught sight of them as they hid.

"And av they only miss the trail, we'll have a chance, liftinant."

From the dark hole in which they were, they could see their foes advancing unsuspectingly to the edge of the wood, and, as luck would have it, at a part of the wood over which they themselves had not passed. The Indians were chattering and laughing, contrary to their custom on the war-path, proving that they did not anticipate enemies near them, and soon disappeared among the trees, going in a direction that promised to bring them out close to the scene of the morning's attempted assassination.

As soon as they were fairly out of sight, Tim crept softly out of the hollow, laid his head to the earth, and listened intently for some time. Then he started up, and beckoned to Everard.

"Follow, liftinant," he said, in a low tone, and stepped off toward the open fields. At the edge of the wood he halted, and took a long, searching look all round the horizon. Not a soul was in sight as far as the woods opposite. Tim at once struck into the path through which the Indians had come among the wheat, and went at a fast walk, nearly a run, toward the opposite woods. As he went, he kept a keen look-out ahead, for Tim was trying a desperate chance in crossing this open field as he did, when the woods in front might very likely be full of Indians. But he knew that those behind would almost inevitably catch his trail very soon, and a forward movement at any risk had become an imperative necessity.

Before the two friends had entirely crossed the field, they heard, far behind them, the loud death-halloo of the Indians, announcing that

these had stumbled over the bodies, and Tim Murphy instantly dropped flat on his face in the tall yellow wheat, followed by Everard.

"Hould still!" whispered the scout, as Everard imprudently raised his head to look around. "The divils 'll all be out watchin' the opens, in the drinkin' of a glass of whisky. Hould still, and they'll never see ye."

Everard lay still and listened. The howling over the corpses became louder than ever, and then stopped suddenly and burst out again. He could see nothing where he was, for the tall yellow wheat all round him, and the suspense of waiting became very trying. Not fifty yards off were the woods, and they could not reach them without being discovered. It seemed to Everard as if they must be seen where they were, indeed, but the dirty drab into which the originally white hunting-shirt had faded rendered the two friends quite invisible, from its similarity in color to the grain.

Presently Tim Murphy took off his cap, and rose up on his hands and knees to peep out among the wheat-heads, motioning Everard to lie still. He remained in this posture for some minutes, and then sunk down again, with a look of satisfaction.

"They're pickin' out the trail," he whispered, "and not lookin' this way. Now's the time, liftin'ant."

And he rose up and crept forward through the grain on hands and knees, leaving a plain trail behind him no doubt, but hidden from view by the tall spears of wheat, where the trails of wild animals, wandering at will, crossed it in every direction, a melancholy picture of neglect. Everard followed in the same fashion, each trailing two rifles behind him; and in this way they soon gained the shelter of the woods unseen, and were able to stand erect once more. It was not till they were buried in the wood, and out of sight of the open field, that Everard asked:

"Why is it, Tim, that you lay still so long before you crept away?"

"Sure and weren't the Injuns in full sight?" asked Tim, in return. "The first thing they'd do was to glower over the fields, and av a stalk of grain had looked askew, they'd 'a' been after us, like St. Patrick after the snakes. Now they'll have to trail us, and, bedad, Tim Murphy can move faster than they can trail, and we'll have a chance."

"But how shall we throw them off the trail?" asked Everard.

"Divil a fear o' that," said Tim, confidently. "Afore Colonel Butler comes up, they'll have enough of trailing Double-Death, I'll go bail. How we're to find the ould harridan they call Queen Esther, and get the young lady away from her, that's the divil of a job. But come along, liftin'ant. We're getting nearer the village every moment, and 'twon't do to be talkin'. We'll need eyes and ears for twinty, so no more chat."

Everard saw the sense of this advice, and the two friends proceeded through the woods in dead silence, making the best use of eyes and ears that they could. Tim Murphy was one of those cool, reckless fellows, found nowhere in such perfection as among our American frontiersmen, who deliberately stake their lives against hundreds of hostile chances, and come off scot free from the midst of perils, by the mere force of pluck and coolness, fertility of invention, and daring of execution. Everard had many of the same qualities, but he lacked the experience acquired by the other in many a bush-fight, and was content to follow him as a pupil. He knew that they were going straight toward a village of hostile Indians, and that more were on their trail behind; and yet he followed without hesitation. Against equal numbers of foes they were well protected, the one having three, the other two rifle-shots to fire, without reloading; besides which, Everard had retained the holster-pistols from his saddle, which he had thrust into his belt at the moment of departure. But the foes they were to meet were hundreds in number, and likely to be keen and vigilant.

Nevertheless, they went forward steadily, the woods becoming deeper and darker as they proceeded, the ground gradually sinking lower, carpeted with dark-brown moss. The drought of the summer had changed the place from a swamp, and there were only little pools here and there, at long distances, where some deep hole had been made by the uprooting of a wind-struck tree; still there were plentiful evidences that it was nothing but a dried-up swamp, and Tim whispered to his companion to be cautious, for the Indian towns were generally at the edges of swamps. They advanced silently, treading in each other's steps with great precaution, Tim Murphy keeping a sharp look-out ahead and to either side. The forest was unusually silent—a bad sign. Here and there, a long way off, they could hear the tap of the woodpecker on some dead tree, or the chatter of the squirrel, but near them all was silent. Presently Tim halted and listened intently. A low murmur, could be heard in the woods directly ahead of them, where the ground rose up from the edge of the swamp.

"There's the village, beyant the hill," whis-

pered Tim. As he spoke, he turned and struck off to the right, into the densest part of the swamp.

CHAPTER VIII. QUEEN ESTHER.

At the door of an Indian wigwam, in the midst of a village of similar structures, a young girl was seated on a bear-skin, absently gazing on the antics of a number of little naked children, who were tumbling about in the dirt, quarreling with some rough, wolfish-looking curs for the possession of sundry half-devoured bones. Here and there at the doors of the lodges the squaws were sitting in the sunset, enjoying rest and gossip, while the warriors were all in a grand circle on a green in the center of the village, smoking solemnly, as if at a council.

The young girl was elaborately attired in all the finery of a chief's daughter, with short blue cloth skirt, worked in beads and porcupine-quills, her swelling bust half-revealed by the open hunting-shirt of doe-skin, while a blanket of more than common fineness fell from her shoulders. But a glance at her face was sufficient to show that she was no Indian, but a white woman, and a very pretty one at that, a cheerful, healthy country girl, with clear, dark eyes, magnificent hair, and a form like a young panther's for mingled grace and vigor.

It was, indeed, no other than Marian Neilson, who had been adopted by the Indian queen, according to a common custom of the tribes, to replace a daughter slain in the battle: for Queen Esther, like many of the Eastern Indians, had enforced "woman's rights" in a practical form a hundred years before they were agitated in civilized countries, and went to battle with her daughters at the head of her warriors.

Marian looked thoughtful and sad, but by no means downcast. There was a fund of quiet heroism in those women of the Revolution that kept them up under the most fearful trials to an extent we little think of nowadays. She had seen so many horrors during the sack of Wyoming, that her own fate, a mildly treated captive, appeared to be a very light one compared to the sufferings of many women more delicately reared than herself. She had seen a mother carrying her newly-born infant twenty miles on foot, the child itself a corpse, to obtain the poor privilege of burying the little creature, without being tomahawked and scalped for her pains.*

In the presence of woes like these, and others nearly as trying, Marian felt that she had much cause for thankfulness, for, save the restraint of her liberty, she suffered nothing, and was treated with kindness by her adopted mother, with reverence by the Indians.

She was thinking at the moment of Everard Barbour, her soldier lover, far away, as she thought, on duty, and wondering if he had heard the news, and whether he believed her dead with so many others.

"He will come after me," she thought, "if he has any reason to believe I live, and if not, I shall never see him again. He will see so many beautiful ladies in Philadelphia that he will forget poor Marian, and, perhaps, be glad of her death."

As she sat there musing, a strange figure approached the lodge from the rear. It was that of a tall, gaunt old woman, haggard and hollow-eyed, with long gray hair flowing down her back. Her dress was that of a warrior, but composed of expensive velvets, bedizened with gold lace, too clearly the plunder of some civilized settlement. She bore at her belt a long scalp-knife and a tomahawk, the head of the latter dark and rusty from recent stains. Her face was that of a statue, as apparently devoid of human feeling as if it had been made of bronze. The remains of great beauty were there, but it was the cruel beauty of the tigress, and her fierce expression rendered even that repulsive.

This was the celebrated Queen Esther, better known as Kate Montour, queen of the Senecas. This woman was reputed to be the half-breed daughter of Count Frontenac, one of the last French Governors of Canada, and had in her youth enjoyed all the luxuries of the vice-regal palace at Quebec, but having returned to her people, she had surpassed them all in atrocities at the massacre of Wyoming, where she deliberately brained all the prisoners with her own hand. And yet, as she now advanced and addressed Marian in English, there was a grace and refinement in her manner that told of her early training rather than her later deeds, and Marian looked up with a smile, for the queen's countenance was softened to her.

"Marian, what dream you of?" said Queen Esther, in a deep, musical voice and very pure English. "Has my daughter not ceased yet to mourn for the coward whites who fell by the hands of my warriors? This is not well, Marian?"

She spoke in the accents of a cultivated and well-educated person, with only a slight French accent.

"Alas, madam," said Marian, a little sadly, "we cannot all command our hearts. Remem-

* A fact.

ber that I lost my mother, sister and many dear friends in the slaughter of last month. I cannot forget them yet."

"But you must forget them," said the Indian queen, sternly. "Look at me, Marian Neilson. Do you think that I never had a heart? Ay, child, long, long years ago I was young and beautiful. Soldiers and gentlemen flocked around me in my father's house, seeking my hand, and everything seemed to draw me from the people of my Indian mother, and make me like you. And what, think you, changed me and made me what I am?"

"I do not know," said Marian, wonderingly.

"White cruelty," said Queen Esther, slowly; "the forked tongue that dwells in every white man of them all. I believed the soft voice of one of them, and found too late that he had lied to me—that he sought not an honorable alliance, but my shame. And why, think you, Marian? Because of my mother's blood only! The whites can never forgive us for being injured by them. They found us lords of the soil, and they cozened us out of our birthright, till we are strangers in our own land. And they cannot forgive us for living, they cannot pardon one drop of Indian blood in our veins. He wronged me, and I swore vengeance. Ay, girl, and I've had it, too."

Marian shuddered slightly at the fierce gleam of the old queen's eye, as she remembered what she had seen, and Queen Esther pursued:

"You think much of the slaughter of your people the other day, and of the death of the prisoners taken in arms. How many did we slay compared to the rest of your people? Now tell me, where are the Pequods, where are the Narragansetts, where are the Wampanoags, where are all the tribes that once ranged, free and happy, from the St. Lawrence to the waters of the Sound? Who slew them? How did they die? What pity have you for their massacre? Who tells of the children of King Philip, sold as slaves—of the Massachusetts tribes exterminated from the face of the earth by your pious Christian warriors? Who cares for them or for their kindred? Girl, I tell you, not unless we were to sweep every man, woman and child of your accursed race into the sea, without mercy, could we equal the injuries that you have inflicted on us for generations. My people are poor and ignorant. They know not all that I do. I have learned the wisdom of the whites, but my heart is all red, and I have used it for the good of my people. Go ask the white ruffians that call themselves Indian-fighters whom they dread the most of any, and they will tell you the band of Queen Esther. Ay, and if I were only a man, I would do much more. Enough! You see I have stealed my heart. See that you keep yours in subjection, girl."

"I will try not to show my feelings," said Marian, in a low voice.

"Remember that you are my daughter now," said the queen, sternly. "I lost her in the battle, with my two sons. You take her place. She was like a statue. She showed no fear, and no sorrow. See that you do like her. Come. We are going to the council. You must come with me. You shall be bound to us more firmly soon. Your heart is still with the whites. We must draw it to the forest by wedding you to a brave warrior."

Marian had risen at her first words, and was standing by the queen. At the utterance of the last sentence she started and turned deadly pale.

"Madam," she faltered, "surely it can not be necessary to do that yet. Indeed, I will be faithful and obedient to you, remembering your kindness, but I can not, must not, be married as yet."

The queen of the Senecas turned round and favored her with a piercing glance, half-suspicion, half-contempt.

"Did you think I spared you to please your whims?" she demanded, in a tone of scorn. "Girl, are you a fool, or do you take me for one? I spared your life to use you for my purposes. You are beautiful, and I am old. My influence wanes among these fickle savages. Well, you shall restore it. Black Eagle, the son of Giengwatah, has asked for your hand, and I promised it to him. Follow me."

She turned and swept solemnly away toward the council, followed slowly and hesitatingly by Marian, who now began to realize the true perils of her situation. Till that moment she had never dreamed of them, imagining that pity for her fate had inspired Queen Esther's mercy so far.

The chiefs were gathered in the circle, smoking together, and a place was left in front of the grand lodge for the queen of the Senecas. With a courtesy unusual among Indians, and only taught them by this singular woman—compound of barbarism and civilization, as she was, from her double parentage and education—the whole circle rose to their feet and bowed their plumed heads in obeisance as Queen Esther took her position, with Marian beside her. At a signal from her they resumed their seats and began the business of the meeting. Marian sat down close to her protectress, or tyrant, whichever she might be, and furtively scanned

the features of the Indians. The first warrior that rose to his feet wore the stately form of her unwelcome Indian suitor, the chief, Black Eagle.

CHAPTER IX.

DOUBLE-DEATH'S DEEDS.

WHEN Black Eagle rose to his feet and opened the council, the sun had set, and the twilight was creeping rapidly on. The generality of the people, squaws, children and all, composed a second large and irregular circle, outside that of the council-fire, and watched the proceedings from afar with much interest. The vigilance of all the tribe appeared to be relaxed, and there were no scouts or sentries out.

Marian watched the chief uneasily as he rose and spoke. Black Eagle was a very fine-looking warrior, tall, erect, lithe as a panther, with a face of the peculiar aquiline beauty sometimes seen among the Indians. He looked and spoke like the great chief he was, and the girl could not restrain a glance of admiration, much as she dreaded the idea of marrying an Indian.

"Great queen of the Senecas," said Black Eagle, "a little bird came to the lodge of one of the warriors of this tribe, not long ago, and sung a sweet song into the ears of Black Eagle. The talons of the eagle were sheathed, and his beak forgot to rend, as he listened to the song of the little bird, whose notes were so sweet. The bird sung a song of a pale-faced maiden, and, twittered to Black Eagle that the maiden should be his wife. Sung the bird true, queen, or sung he falsely?"

"Black Eagle lay in his lodge, and the hand of sleep pressed down his eyelids. The Master of Life, who speaks in the thunder, forgot his terrors, and whispered with the night breeze in the ear of Black Eagle, whispered soft things, and sweet, sweet as the honey that the wild bee hides in the hollow trees, soft as the purl of the forest brook that tinkles among the roots of the mosses. The night breeze whispered that Black Eagle's lodge was lonely, that there was no maiden there to cook his meat, that the fire would go out for lack of a hand to put on fuel. But then it murmured that the Great Spirit had pity on Black Eagle and sent him a wife, whom he should make an Indian chief's mother, though her face should be white. And then the wind spoke her name, and told the chief to ask her of the great queen of the Senecas, whose daughter the fair white was. Was the breeze the voice of the Master of Life, or was it only a lying spirit that spoke to Black Eagle?"

When the chief had finished, he sat down, and a deep silence pervaded the circle in the growing darkness. Marian, who as yet understood nothing of the Indian tongue, knew nothing certainly of what was going on, but she guessed truly the purport of the chief's speech from its being directly addressed to Queen Esther.

The old queen rose up in her turn, after a pause, and addressed the warriors.

"Senecas and Cayugas," she said, "you have heard the words of Black Eagle, and you know that he is a warrior with a straight tongue. The words of the Great Spirit have come to Sheshequin, telling the queen of the Senecas that she has not long to live. She is getting old, and Black Eagle is young and strong. Let him take the White Flower to his lodge, and become the son of Sheshequin."

She was about to sit down and give place to another speaker, when a slight commotion was observable in one of the groups composing the outer circle. The next moment a small, active figure darted through a gap in the outer circle, leaped over the heads of the chiefs in council, and halted at the very door of the medicine-lodge, which formed part of the sacred circle within. As the stranger darted across the outer ground, a crowd of squaws and boys leaped up, yelling, in pursuit, but the instant that he had reached the medicine-lodge, and laid his hand on the pole that stood in front, a dead and unbroken silence prevailed.

The chiefs in the inner circle never relaxed a moment from their solemn dignity of appearance during the brief racket. They merely turned their eyes now on the new-comer, with grave and inquiring glances, but no one spoke. The stranger was a short, wiry, dark-haired man, with intensely black eyes, his face darkened by three weeks' growth of black beard. He wore the grayish dun hunting-shirt—once snow-white deerskin—that distinguished Morgan's rifle-corps, and carried in his hand a short, brown double-barreled rifle, the butt grounded, while its owner leant carelessly upon the muzzle.

The first person to break the silence was the stranger, none other than Double-Death, the scout, himself. He addressed himself in English to Queen Esther, or Sheshequin, saying:

"Bedad, yer ladyship, I'm happy to see ye in such good company, and, av it's not displazin' to ye, I've come to pay ye a call, to see yerself and Miss Neilson there."

The Indian queen discovered no surprise. She knew that as long as Tim Murphy maintained his position by the lodge, the superstitions of the Indians would keep him safe. Her own enlightened mind would not have scrupled to remove him at once, but the power of superstition forbid the idea, while the bold borderer was un-

der the shadow of the medicine-lodge, which he had gained so adroitly. She asked, in a cold tone:

"What would you, bold stranger? The ears of Sheshequin are open."

Tim looked round the circle for a moment, and took in the glances of distrust and suspicion with which he was regarded. He perceived that he was known by all, for, indeed, his person was one that every Indian had heard of through all the frontier. He addressed himself to Black Eagle, to find if his conjecture was true.

"The chief is a great warrior," said Tim, in the Indian language. "Does he know who has entered his camp to-night?"

"Black Eagle knows Double-Death well," said the chief, gravely. "Let my brother beware how he leaves the medicine-lodge. It protects only those who stand near enough to touch it."

Tim laughed shortly.

"Double-Death is not a fool," he said, in answer. "He has come to see the Senecas, and he wishes to speak with them and take away his scalp in safety."

"He can not do both," said Black Eagle, gravely. "Double-Death is a great warrior, but he is under the wing of the Black Eagle now, and the talons of the bird of battle are sharp. Let him look to himself."

The eyes of all the chiefs and warriors were bent upon Tim's figure, and the reckless borderer realized that his peril was, indeed, great, for the surprise of the Indians had given way to exultation as they realized the fact that the dreaded warrior, Double-Death, was in the heart of their village and completely in their power. He turned and addressed himself to Queen Esther, however, with admirable coolness, dropping into his quaint brogue again.

"Heaven save yer ladyship! Would ye be wantin' to know what I came fur? And it's me-self that's glad to see yer ladyship enjoyin' such powerful fine health, and to find that ye've increased yer family wid that purty young lady there. Will yer ladyship plaze to tell me what ye'll take fur her, to give her back to her friends?"

"Nothing," said the Indian queen, firmly. "She is mine. What do I want of your money, or that of her friends? I have more than they all. She may think herself fortunate to be raised from a farmer's daughter to a queen of the warriors of the Senecas. Is that all you came for?"

"Faith, no," said Tim, coolly. "I came to see if the whole tribe was here. Ye don't do yer sintry duty in these quarters as well as the greenest milishy of Philadelphia. I might have brought a whole rig'ment of sodgers in, as 'asy as kiss yer hand, where I came in. There's a young liftinant of dragoons comin' in purty soon, Misther Everard Barbour, as 'll tache the lazy spalpeens their duty before many days. Ye see if he don't, now."

Marian Neilson, who had been listening intently to the conversation, here burst suddenly in:

"Everard here? Gracious heavens! They will kill him!"

Tim knew her very well by sight, having often seen her at Saratoga the previous year. The borderer scratched his head, with a comical air of mortification, as he observed:

"D'ye mind that now? Here's poor Tim Murphy in the midst of the bloody savages, and no one cares av he gets cut to bits; but let him mention the name of a young gentleman, and bedad, ivery one's interested for fear he'll lose his ill-giant wig. Niver fear, Miss Marian. Whin Misther Everard comes here, 'twill be wid disciplined forces, and he'll make the thavin' nagurs give ye up. Whisper now, and I'll tell ye a sayeret."

Marian rose up quite unsuspectingly and came forward, when the long, skinny arm of Queen Esther was extended, and plucked her back.

"So, girl," said the Indian queen, in English, "I have found your lover's name, have I—Everard Barbour? He shall burn at the stake, along with yonder Irish renegade, who has rebelled against his king, to-morrow noon."

"Thank ye for nothing, my lady Montour," said Tim, coolly. "And maybe Tim Murphy 'll have the luck to chate ye, as he has many another chief and warrior. I've got a message from General Washington for ye, my lady."

"And what says the arch-rebel?" demanded the queen, scornfully. She had taken the side of the king through motives of vengeance on the Americans to employ savages in war, and foreseeing opportunities of unlimited slaughter on the British side. She had all the Tory terms at her tongue's end.

"What says the arch-rebel?" she asked.

"Bedad, ma'am, and the arch-rebel, as ye call him, sends word that, for every village the Six Nations have burnt this summer, tin of their own shall be burnt before two leaves have fallen, and that, av Queen Esther gets tuk, he'll hang her as high as ould Queen Esther hung Haman. D'ye mind that, now?"

Tim delivered his message, real or supposititious, with great earnestness, and at the same

time beckoned to Marian Neilson to approach him, as he stood at the door of the sacred medicine-lodge. Hardly understanding what he meant, the girl yet perceived that he had a purpose in so doing. She made a rapid rush forward toward him, and Tim held out his hand to her, when Black Eagle, who had been watching the scout like a lynx all the while, suddenly sprung up and seized the girl, not ungently but firmly, saying, in broken English:

"White Flower stay with Black Eagle. Double-Death no good outside of medicine-lodge. Starve to death. Come."

Marian did not try to struggle with the powerful chief. She understood that for some reason the scout's person was safe within the bounds of the medicine-lodge, and judged that he wished to get her there too. It was equally clear that the Indians would not permit this, and that they had penetrated his design, for the Indian queen started up now and advanced close to the scout, saying, menacingly:

"Let Double-Death look to himself. He is a great warrior, but he has played his last trick to-day. Let him stay in the medicine-lodge till he starve and rot. My young men may not hurt him, but neither may they touch him nor bring him food. He dies within the tent."

"Tim Murphy feels as if he were worth a dozen dead men yet," said the scout, quietly, retiring as he spoke, within the sacred purlieus of the medicine-lodge. "Miss Marian, av the ould harridan gives ye a chance, run in here as hard as ye can put, and I'll tell ye why whin ye're inside."

"Break up the council," said the stern voice of Queen Esther, impatiently. "We have talked long enough to the white dog. Surround the tent and let him learn that there are many ways of killing a pale-face without breaking medicine."

In a few minutes more the council had broken up, without coming to any conclusion about the matter of the wedding. A silent circle of guards, each with a loaded rifle, was stationed around the medicine-tent, and a ring of fires lit, so that there could be no chance of the prisoner's escape in the darkness. The sacredness of the lodge forbade them to fire upon a refugee within its limits, and they were compelled to rely on starvation to effect their purpose. As if to show them that he was provided against that, Murphy coolly produced a large piece of dried meat, and began to eat his supper in the midst of his enemies as if he'd been at home.

CHAPTER X.

THE SURPRISE.

In the mean time it may naturally be asked, what had become of Everard Barbour? Murphy, in spite of his appearance of ease, was secretly very anxious about the latter, knowing the skill of the Indian trackers. He had left his companion well hidden in the summit of a large tree in the swamp, before he set out on his own daring expedition which had ended in his running the Indian line and reaching the medicine-lodge so cleverly. It was now about time that the Indian trailers, who had stumbled so unluckily on the dead bodies up the valley, should be back into camp, if indeed they had not already come on Everard. Tim trusted to the darkness to cover the track, however, and he was right. Pretty soon as he sat at the door of the lodge, munching his parched venison, a loud halloo was heard in the distance, which was replied to, and Tim knew that scouts were coming in.

They soon made their appearance, the same men that he had seen on the track before, and were met by several Seneca chiefs and warriors, with whom they held an animated discussion for some minutes, ending in the whole party coming to stare at him.

One of the returned Indians he'd up a fresh scalp, which Murphy recognized as that of his slain comrade, Jim Burke, and observed, in broken English:

"Good scalp—ugh!—soon get udder—Double-Death's scalp—ugh!"

"Ye dirty spalpeen," said Tim, scornfully, "it don't lie in yer bloody painted hide to take my scalp. Look here, ye omadhaun; here's three honest scalps, taken fairly this mornin' from yer brothers; d'ye mind that now?"

And Tim rattled the ghastly trophies at his belt.

"A squaw c'u'd rob a poor devil of his scalp, av she found him lyin' in the road dead, but it takes a man to take my scalp, Misther Injun."

The Indian laughed savagely, as he looked at the helpless position of the other, thinking himself safe.

"Soon find Double-Death's brudder," he said, mockingly. "Chiefs out now. Black Eagle out. Roast pale-face front of Double-Death. Bring white squaw to see him."

Tim uttered a grunt of contempt, and turned away his head. He knew that Everard must be safe for the present, and that the Indian was only boasting. He kept a still tongue in his head and finished his supper in perfect tranquillity, regardless of the efforts of the Indians to draw him into conversation. The Senecas,

on their part, displayed a curious mixture of honor and treachery. They held the inclosure of the medicine-lodge as sacred as the Arab does the hospitality of his tent, the monk the sanctuary of the altar. They did not dare to drag the bold borderer from thence, but they tried to entice him to leave it. Tim was too well aware, however, of the instant death that awaited him outside of the tent to leave it, and he repaid all their efforts to draw him thence with good-humored contempt, arranging a couch for himself with perfect coolness. When the head medicine-man approached the lodge to enter it, Tim quietly cocked his rifle, and the Indian halted, appalled. He was the only man who had any business there, and he did not care to risk certain death for the privilege of killing Tim afterward. The scout had calculated on his cowardice, and made no effort to provoke the medicine-man, for he knew on how frail a tenure his life hung, even now.

Meanwhile there was considerable bustle among the Indians outside. It was true that Black Eagle had departed on the trail of Tim and his friend, to try and discover the hiding-place of the latter. The scout could see torches moving about in the swamp, and judged that the Senecas were in deadly earnest. He smiled to himself as he thought how he had led them on the wrong scent, and waited confidently for the morning, by which time, in all probability, the powerful expedition under Colonel Zebulon Butler would be up and ready for the attack.

So the long, tedious hours of the night wore away, the camp sunk into silence, the fires died away into glimmering ashes, and no one seemed to be awake save the guards round the medicine-lodge, and the trailing party of Black Eagle. Double-Death never closed an eye all that long night, so intense was his anxiety. He pretended to sleep to impress the Indians with his coolness, but he was furtively watching all the time.

At last, after what seemed an age of watching, a distant shot was heard in the swamp, followed by a general yell. Tim sat up and listened. In a moment more several shots followed close together and a second yell.

"They've found him," muttered the borderer, and he looked anxiously out of the tent door toward the east. A faint, whitish glow in that direction rendered the dark outline of the forest very conspicuous, and Tim knew that the dawn was coming. As he strained his ears, another single shot pealed out from the swamp, and another angry yell followed.

"Bedad, he ain't kilt yet," muttered Tim, excitedly. "That's his rifle, I'll go bail."

For some minutes there was no more shooting, and then a second volley of at least twenty rifles made Tim start. It was followed by one more single shot after a short interval.

"Hurroo for ye, lift nant!" shouted the delighted borderer. "He'll bate them yet, av they don't set fire to the moss."

The last consideration sobered Tim. He had left Everard in a gigantic dead tree covered with dried moss, and realized that his friend was safe from direct attack, unless his opponents undertook to smoke him out, which they well might, the tree being hollow.

For some time longer the swamp was quiet after this, and Tim couldn't make out what was going on. The light increased in the east, and objects began to be plainly visible in camp. Gradually the Indians came out of their lodges, and a few sauntered off into the swamp as if to see what was going on. Soon there came a dropping, irregular fire, and the scout knew that they must be shooting at Everard in the tree, perhaps preparing to assault his position. What success they might have had is uncertain, for all of a sudden a new sound broke on the senses from an opposite quarter.

It was the gathering shout of a long line of soldiers from the other side of the village, followed by a long, rolling volley, and a shower of bullets came tearing through the lodges. Before the echo had died away the whole village was full of warriors and squaws, tumbling pell-mell out of the wigwams in dire confusion, with shouts and yells, and then a line of white men made their appearance in full sight from the woods, and came rushing into the village.

"Hurroo for our side," yelled Tim, casting off the caution he had hitherto displayed. In a moment more he had shot down two of his guards, and ran whooping and yelling through the village to meet his comrades. The surprise was complete, the rout utter and irremediable. Away went warriors and women in panic flight into the swamp. Tim saw the Indian queen, with the activity of a girl, rush out and leap on a horse that stood by her lodge; then she was gone into the swamp, and Tim rushed into the wigwam and found Marian Neilson standing, with clasped hands, pale and resolute, waiting for her rescuers. Without more ado the borderer caught her round the waist and hurried her out, just as the foremost soldiers reached the lodge. The village was already cleared, save for a few children too young to run, and one or two squaws. The rest of the tribe was in the swamp, from whence a dropping fire was opened on the exposed soldiers, and Tim had only time

to give Marian in charge of a party of slightly-wounded soldiers, who were halting and going to the rear, when the American line swept forward again, and dashed into the swamp with a rattling volley.

Double-Death was not the man to stay behind on such an occasion, and he was soon among the foremost of the advanced line, loading and firing with his usual skill and rapidity. The Indians were much demoralized, huddled together in a heap as they were, and made but a feeble resistance, for the line of the patriots, though inferior in number, far outflanked them, and kept coming in on either wing, so as to surround them and leave them no resource but to break through or flee still further.

A sudden check was soon experienced, however, from the cool daring of Black Eagle, who displayed in this crisis the ability of a great warrior. The band with which he had been besieging Everard in the tree, made a furious attack, in the nick of time, upon the exposed flank of the patriots, rolling them up in disorder, and giving time for the retreating Indians to run out and form a line, while the squaws continued their flight.

From thenceforth the battle was more equal, and the soldiers finally halted and drew off, satisfied with their success, returning to the village which they had taken, and loading themselves with plunder. The Indians seemed to have been disheartened, for they made no attempt to harass the retreat, but retired into the deep forests, from whence the small force of the Americans did not dare to drive them. But what was the rage of Tim Murphy when he discovered that in their flight they had carried off Everard. In vain he begged the commander of the expedition to try one more charge. Butler was inexorable.

"I can not sacrifice fifty men on the chance of rescuing one who is perhaps dead now," he said.

And Tim had to acknowledge he was right. Before night the expedition was on its way back to the mountains, having burned the village and recovered a great portion of the plunder of Wyoming, finding horses and wagons, taken from the settlers, all ready to load.

On their return they were attacked on several occasions by desultory parties of the Indians, but brought off their spoils in safety. Queen Esther was not with her tribe any longer, and the Indians seemed to be dispirited. Black Eagle and the queen—so a prisoner reported—had gone off to Seneca lake, to gather the tribes for a general raid on the settlements. The Queen of the Senecas was not the woman to take a defeat tamely.

And Marian, half crazy with anxiety for Everard's fate, was forced to return to her home sorrowing.

CHAPTER XI.

THE INDIAN PARADISE.

A FEW days after the attack on Queen Esther's band, an Indian chief, in all the panoply of the war-path, came loping out of the deep forest, near the head of Seneca lake, followed by a long file of warriors. He stood in the very heart of the Indian country—that paradise of the Six Nations, the lovely Genesee valley. There where the golden wheat now waves, in the garden of New York, then the primeval forest covered the earth, interspersed with emerald glades where the deer grazed undisturbed, and the tribes of the Nations had found their happy hunting-grounds.

The scene before him was the perfection of beauty. Art and agriculture had combined with nature to make the spot charming. Not a tree had fallen by the ax. Stately oaks, beeches and maples stood in long regular vistas for miles upon miles of wilderness, unbroken by underwood of any kind, the ground carpeted with green moss and fine grasses, the breeze whispering softly among the tree-trunks. In front of the chief lay a natural expanse of rolling prairie, dotted with cornfields, with regular orchards of fruit trees scattered here and there, but never a fence to break the soft lines of the scenery with dull uniformity. It was indeed the golden province of the Indian in those days, and the Genesee valley was his secure home, buried deep in pathless forests, hidden like a diamond in a mine.

In the distance lay the glimmering sheet of romantic Lake Seneca, dotted with canoes, darting here and there, and diagonally in front and to the left of the chief rose a smooth, rounded hill, broken at one side by a dark, narrow gorge, out of which a stream rushed brawling, to lose itself in the forest. Clustered around the mouth of the gorge was a smiling village, composed for the most part of neat frame houses, denoting a high degree of civilization, while the humbler wigwams were pitched here and there around the edge of the forest.

The chief, a magnificent-looking young warrior, turned to his men.

"Let the children of the Eagle scatter to their homes," he said, in a musical voice. "The war-path is ended. Let us rest in our homes."

The warriors raised a shrill cry of exultation, which was replied to from the village, and squaws and children came running out to wel-

come the returning Senecas, as they scattered to their homes.

The chief cast himself down at the foot of a huge hickory tree, and remained watching the scene as if waiting for something. Before long the sound of voices in the rear announced that others approached, and the head of the motley column of men, women and children, with horses and cattle loaded with baggage, came straggling out of the forest, and dispersed into the village. There was another pause, and then a second file of warriors passed by, followed by the stately figure of the Indian queen on horseback. Riding beside her, his arms lashed behind him, his feet tied under the horse's belly, was Everard Barbour, pale from loss of blood, with his head bound up.

Queen Esther drew up both horses by the side of the stately chief, who had risen to his feet at her approach, and saluted her.

"Black Eagle has come home. Why does he not enter his house?"

"It is empty," said the chief, laconically.

"Let him take one to fill it," said the Indian queen, proudly. "There are many maidens of the Senecas who will be proud to mate with my son."

Black Eagle shook his head.

"I am not your son," he said, gravely. "Black Eagle went on the war-path; his eyes and ears were open. Queen Sheshequin stayed in camp and fell asleep. She made the Great Spirit a liar, and Black Eagle's heart is very dark to-day."

"What means my son?" demanded the queen, half angrily.

"The White Flower is gone, and the Queen of the Senecas has lost her," replied Black Eagle, gloomily. "She must be found again, or Black Eagle leads his warriors to their own homes."

The old queen looked at him fixedly.

"Let Black Eagle take his vengeance on her lover, then," she said. "We have him here prisoner, and he shall pay for the White Flower who loves him."

The chief regarded Everard as she indicated him, with a strange glance, half dislike, half contempt. To the queen's surprise he did not seem to care about it.

"He is but a child," he said. "Black Eagle and Thayendanegea war not with squaws and children. They have heard the words of the Great Spirit, and only strike warriors."

Queen Esther frowned. She hated the name of Thayendanegea (better known to us as Brant). That remarkable Indian had enjoyed as good an education as herself, but with different results, for Brant was as kind and humane as the queen was merciless and savage.

"Thayendanegea has read too many books," she said, contemptuously. "His heart is white and soft as milk. The red-man takes vengeance on his foe. Behold this young viper, and burn him at the stake. His dying groans shall make you forget the voice of the White Flower."

"Not good," said Black Eagle, sententiously. "When a man has lost a singing-bird, he does not kill wolves to hear their howling. He hunts for the bird."

"How can we find her?" demanded the queen, angrily. "Has the Great Spirit cast a cloud over Black Eagle's brain, that he talks madness?"

"No," said the chief, calmly. "He has said that those who lose must find. Queen Sheshequin knows the ways of the whites. Let her find the White Flower for me."

Queen Esther considered for a moment. She appeared to hesitate. At last she said:

"Come to my house and we will talk of this. I see no way yet."

Black Eagle bowed with the courtesy of a perfect gentleman, and followed the queen as she rode into the village with her captive. Everard looked with wonder around him, as he passed through a village as neat and picturesque as any he had ever seen, beheld elegant houses of considerable size, covered with trailing vines, pretty flower-gardens, handsome stables, and all the appearances of luxury and civilization, where he had expected only squalid wigwams and heaps of garbage.

The houses appeared to be the homes of the more considerable chiefs of the tribe, for there were not many of them, but even those were unexpected. He passed through the village and entered the mouth of the dark gorge with his guide, and then on a sudden the scene changed. Without, every thing was soft, and rounded in outline; within, the whole character of the scenery became grand, rugged and imposing.

The gorge narrowed rapidly for about two hundred yards, where it ended abruptly in two lofty cliffs of gray stratified rock, nearly black from the trickle of water from above. The cliffs came close together, and appeared to shut off all further progress, but a white sheet of foam that came down between them announced that there must be a passage for water beyond. They rode up to the foot of the cliff and dismounted, Black Eagle releasing Everard from his bonds. Then he pointed to a rough ladder that led up under an overhanging rock, and motioned Everard to go forward. The young officer mounted the ladder and found himself on

a narrow gallery of plank that ran around a jutting column of rock, within a foot of the face of the white waterfall. Overhead the rock projected so as to make almost a cavern of this singular glen, and as he came round the angle of the rock he found himself in a chasm of the most tremendous kind, down which the water thundered in deafening tones, and where the cliffs presented the most fantastic forms. An artificial way, consisting of ladders and projecting galleries, zigzagged from side to side of this narrow chasm, and after a short climb, suddenly turned a corner and emerged into a solemn cathedral-like amphitheater, where the stream spread out in tranquil shallows over a smooth surface of white rock, forming deep, black pools here and there where the softer rocks had been eaten away by the water.*

At one side of this strange natural amphitheater, nestling under a cliff, stood a large and handsome house of the Swiss fashion, that seemed as if it was exactly made for that place.

The Indian queen set a small whistle to her lips and blew a shrill call, when several young girls came running out of the house to meet her, and began to talk rapidly in the Indian tongue. Everard noticed that what they said appeared to surprise the queen, for she hurried toward the house without noticing him. As she neared the mansion, another figure made its appearance on the steps in front, and came down to meet her, a tiny, trim little female figure, which somehow seemed familiar to Everard. It was attired in some sort of half-savage costume, with short skirts, and had flowing golden hair.

Black Eagle motioned Everard forward, and the young officer obeyed. The nearer he approached, the more familiar did the little figure seem to him to be, and yet when he arrived close to the queen and her interlocutor, he seemed to be still wonderfully surprised, for he started back, with the low exclamation:

"Miss Lacy! Here!"

The lady on her part seemed equally surprised, and even less prepared for the interview. Turning pale as death, she cried:

"Everard Barbour, how came you here, in Heaven's name?"

"I might well ask you the same question," returned the young officer, and he stood, gazing in blank surprise.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SPY QUEEN.

For some minutes the two, so strangely met, were too much astonished to speak further. Miss Lacy recovered herself first, and turned round to Queen Esther, asking, somewhat imperiously:

"How came this gentleman here?"

"As a prisoner," replied the Indian queen, as haughtily. She seemed to resent the tone used by the other.

Charlotte Lacy stamped her tiny foot angrily.

"Fool!" she said. "Must you be told that he is one of us? He is my friend, and must be released at once."

Everard was astonished when he saw this delicate-looking girl arrogating authority, as she seemed to be, over this wild Indian queen; and still more astonished to see the queen yield to her. Queen Esther, for a moment, seemed to be hesitating, and he saw Charlotte Lacy make a rapid and peculiar sign around her own brow, as if describing an imaginary coronet. The sign seemed to have some mystical power in it, for the haughty queen bowed her head and answered in perfectly pure English:

"Your commands are obeyed, madam. He is free."

Black Eagle, who had stood silently by, so far, advanced to Miss Lacy, and bent his knee before her. The girl seemed to have power over every one. She spoke graciously to him, saying:

"Black Eagle is welcome. We have heard of his deeds from our runners. We thank him for bringing us our friend unharmed. Let him ask a boon of the *Spy Queen*, and he shall have it."

"Black Eagle's lodge is empty," said the chief, in a low voice; "and Sheshequin has lost the White Flower that should bloom at the door. Let the queen order that she be recovered, for the little white chief and the White Flower are very near each other in heart, and Black Eagle would not slay a boy like him. Yet he has sworn to the Great Spirit that the White Flower shall bloom in his own lodge, if he have to kill fifty boys."

The chief spoke in his own language, and Everard understood nothing, but he saw Charlotte Lacy start and look uneasy, and then she turned to Queen Esther, whom she asked, impatiently:

"What means Black Eagle? Tell me plainly."

She spoke in French this time, the native tongue of Catherine Montour or Queen Esther,

* Queen Esther's village was situated near the site of the present town of Watkins; and those who have seen its lovely glen may recognize its faint presentment in these pages. It still exists, more lovely than ever.

and the queen as promptly answered, in the same tongue:

"There was a young girl saved from the slaughter at Wyoming, and I had promised to give her to Black Eagle for a wife. But the Americans attacked us by surprise and carried her off, at the same time that we took this boy."

"And this girl—what is she to the white officer?" demanded Charlotte, impatiently. "What means he by their being near together in heart?"

"I suppose that they are lovers," said Queen Esther, indifferently. "The girl was a pretty country lass enough—one Marian Neilson—"

"Who?" demanded the lady, starting.

Queen Esther repeated the name.

"And you lost her, and found him," said Charlotte, as if stunned by the news. "I would have given a hundred pounds for that girl, and you have lost her. I must get her back, and you must find her for me, if she be living yet."

Queen Esther regarded the strange little creature with surprise.

"Why, what is she to you?" she asked.

"My enemy," said Charlotte, in a low voice. "Either she must die, or wed Black Eagle. Where is she now?"

"Nay, I can not say," said the Indian queen. "She lived somewhere near the Sprouts of the Mohawk, so she told me. Probably she is gone there by this time, or is on her way there. What can I do?"

"You must do as you have done before," said the girl, quietly. "That Neilson girl *must* be brought back, or I withdraw my help and the crown subsidies from your tribe. Black Eagle is a good warrior, and you grow old. If you would keep your power, you must obey the orders of the *Spy Queen*."

Queen Esther hesitated and appeared troubled. Again the other made the rapid and mysterious sign before mentioned, and again the proud old woman became humble, and said, as before:

"Your commands shall be obeyed, madam."

"It is well," said Charlotte Lacy. "To-night we will arrange the details."

And then she turned round to Everard, who had understood not a word so far of the rapid French, and had stood wondering while the colloquy was going on.

"Come, Mr. Barbour," she said, as composedly as if in her own parlor in Philadelphia, "let us enter the house and partake of our good Madame Montour's hospitality. She has treated you somewhat roughly, perhaps, but she is a good soul at bottom, this Madame Montour, and you will look different when we have made a Seneca of you. Come, Black Eagle, your wish is granted, and now you must be friends with the young white chief. I say it."

Black Eagle bowed with the courtesy he always exhibited to these two ladies, and answered, in tolerable English:

"Black Eagle is glad to see de little chief. He brave little chief, and fight well. Shake hands, brudder."

Everard took the hand of the tall chief and could not help whispering to Miss Lacy, as they walked toward the house:

"A noble chief, Miss Lacy."

"He is," she answered. "He and Brant are exceptions to the general run of Indians, like our fierce Montour here."

They were several paces in advance, and Everard asked, cautiously:

"Why do you call her Montour? and what in Heaven's name is the secret of your power here, Miss Lacy?"

Charlotte smiled proudly.

"In this valley," she said, "and in many another place, I represent an organization which sways chiefs and queens; ay, woman as I am, there is a realm that my brain alone controls, for my king's service; and your Congress shall yet own that it is a realm of power. Ask no more questions, Everard Barbour, but thank Heaven that you found me here to save your life. I call the woman chief Madame Montour, because it is her name, outside of the tribes. How like you her home in the Glen?"

"It is most lovely," said Everard, looking round the rocky amphitheater with admiration. "I have never seen a more beautiful spot. Does it extend much further?"

"Fully a mile. You shall see it all to-morrow with me," she answered, with a charming smile. "It will look none the less beautiful, will it?"

"Nay, but the pleasure will be so much the greater," he answered. And then they entered the house, which they found full of handsome Indian girls, who came forward to wait on their queen and her guests, with alacrity.

Queen Esther now, still more to Everard's astonishment, developed a new character. She became a hospitable hostess, conversing fluently in French and English, and displaying a softness and grace of manner that rivaled Miss Lacy herself. Nothing perhaps was stranger about this remarkable woman than her adaptability. She had been in Philadelphia some years before, with the other chiefs of the Six Nations, and had been remarked on for her exquisite softness of manner, that told of the breeding of high society. Catherine Montour had not forgotten the palace in the wigwam.

Her house, though handsome, was rather destitute of furniture, the floors being bare, and the skins of animals forming almost the only seats, except in Queen Esther's own apartments; but the food brought in by the servants was abundant and delicate, and Everard retired to rest that night feeling that his lines had fallen in pleasant places, for he was treated as a friend by all the Indians around.

CHAPTER XIII.

DOUBLE-DEATH'S DISCOVERY.

At the same time that Everard Barbour was enjoying the reaction from hostility to hospitality in the glen of Sheshequin, Marian Neilson, depressed in spirits and almost broken-hearted, thinking her lover dead, was slowly journeying toward Albany, under the escort of a small party of military, up the line of the old Albany Post Road. The necessities of the times had caused her to be delayed for some days on the road, and it was only the paternal kindness of Washington himself that enabled her to be traveling now. She had been brought to his head-quarters, at that time near Morristown, New Jersey, and the kind heart of the Commander-in-chief had been touched by her distresses, while the ladies of Morristown had hastened to supply her necessities with every generosity. Availing himself of the opportunity of a party going toward Albany with funds to pay the troops stationed there, the general had offered to send poor Marian home under their escort as far as they went; and, at his own earnest desire, Double-Death had been detailed to act as scout for the party, with permission to see Marian to her own home, after which he was to return, having six weeks further granted him to report in.

Tim effected his purpose in safety, without any extraordinary adventure, and in about three weeks from the time of leaving Morristown, Marian was home again, clasped in her mother's arms. Many and sad were the grievings then, over the terrible tidings she had to impart of so many relatives and friends massacred at Wyoming; and heavy was the anxiety of all as to the fate, probable and shocking, of the captive lover.

Tim Murphy found it difficult to tear himself away from the sorrowing family; and when he at last turned his horse's head toward the south, it was with a formed resolution, which had been floating in his mind for some time, to seek for Everard, and ascertain his fate at all hazards. The scout was just the man to do this. Quick, ready and adaptable, a perfect Indian linguist, he had made up his mind to penetrate the Genesee valley, and find Everard, dead or alive, before he returned.

Double-Death was well mounted and armed. He rode the magnificent charger that had come into Everard's possession so mysteriously in Philadelphia, and carried a pair of double-barreled pistols, besides his own famous rifle. In those days, long before revolvers were thought of, such an equipment rendered its wearer sufficiently formidable to cope with several men, if he was a good shot and cool and bold as Tim Murphy.

Tim turned his horse away from the Neilsons' house, and took the road leading south to Albany, till he was out of sight. He did not propose to reveal his plan to any one. As soon as the woods hid him from sight he left the road, and took up his journey by bridle-paths that led due west, toward the Mohawk river. The country here was wild and uncultivated for many miles, and the way led into the heart of what had been, not long before, the Indian territory. Johnson-town, the next village, was the ancient residence of Sir William Johnson, the British Indian agent, who had lived there in baronial splendor for many years; and his son, Sir John Johnson, an inveterate Tory, was supposed to be hovering about there, even now. The only American settlements, feeble and scattered as those were, indeed, were Fort Plain and Cherry Valley.

But Tim Murphy was not the man to be daunted by any country, however full of danger. The scout rode steadily on, the rest of the day, at a rapid pace, wherever the path was open, and toward evening had emerged from the underwood that told of the neighboring settlements, and entered the primeval forest, where the trees stood in rows of columns for miles, and the way between them was all open. He had left Johnson Hall to his rear, and made his evening camp by the borders of the Mohawk river.

Tim had taken the precaution, before starting, of putting a sack of grain on his horse's back, besides his own provisions, and he found the benefit of his foresight now. He did not dare to make a fire, for certain signs he had seen, convinced him that Indian war-parties were around. He unsaddled his horse, and fed the animal plentifully, and then started on foot for a tour of observation, to find if there were any near, whose vicinity might be dangerous. As the sun went down, and the forest became dark, the chorus of frogs and katydids around assured him that all was right for the present, and after a brief tour he returned, and ate his supper in peace. A second time did the wary scout set forth on his reconnoitering trip before

he thought of sleep, though he had ridden sixty miles that day; and this time he was rewarded for his vigilance. As he ascended a little rise of ground covered with trees, he caught sight, a long way off, of a bright light among the tree-trunks, which he knew at once to be a camp-fire.

"Now, who the devil's that?" soliloquized Mr. Murphy, reflectively. "Injuns, by the piper that played before Moses! No white men would be campin' out here, av they wasn't born fools. Timothy, me boy, let's go on a little voyage of discovery towards thim gentlemen. I know ye're tired, Mr. Murphy, but av ye was to wake up to-morrow mornin' widout a scalp, may be ye'd never be tired again, and ye'd never see Mr. Everard. So, Tim, ye blackguard, git up and travel."

As he spoke, he was cautiously descending the hill toward the distant fire, his rifle ready for immediate use, stepping cautiously. It was a time of year peculiarly favorable for a silent advance, for the last year's leaves were fully rotted away, and the moss was smooth and soft under foot. Tim advanced in true borderer style, his keen black eyes roving here and there, sheltering himself behind every tree as he went, and carefully scanning the ground ahead of him, ere venturing to cross it. In this way it took him near an hour before he came anywhere near the fire, and could distinguish the figures around it. When he did, he halted behind a tree, and took a long and careful observation, before going any nearer. There were several dark figures passing and repassing before a large camp-fire, and what surprised the scout was, that they were not Indians, but whites, from their dress.

Tim Murphy now went down on hands and knees, and crawled slowly nearer to the fire, with the patience and caution of an Indian hunter, resolved to find out for himself the mystery of the fire. If white men were there, they were probably Tories, for Americans would be in their homes. As Tim came nearer, he perceived that the men wore ordinary civilian dress, and had the appearance of servants. Near the fire, also, was a female figure, with the white cap and apron of a French waiting-maid. Tim rubbed his eyes at first, thinking he must be dreaming, but the fact was too visible to be gainsayed. There was a regular smart French maid sitting by a camp-fire in the wild woods, tending a small coffee-pot. Tim pursued his researches still closer, greatly interested, till he was near enough to hear conversation. Then it was that, casting his eyes forward through the woods beyond the fire, another object met his view, that caused him more astonishment than ever. It was nothing else than a large old-fashioned traveling carriage, drawn up in the shade of the woods, with several horses feeding near it. "An ould woman travelin' for her health, bedad!" muttered the scout to himself. "And I've tuk all this trouble, thinkin' they were Injuns. By the howly pokers, she must be a quare cr'ature, whoever travels out here in this fashion! Mr. Murphy, there something devilish quare about this. We'll go a little nearer."

And Double-Death looked sharply round him, and then crawled over, snake-fashion, to the bole of an immense tree, with roots standing up out of the ground so as to make an excellent cover. The tree itself was not more than sixty feet from the fire, and Tim saw that it was as near as he dared go. He could catch the sound of voices, and a considerable clatter it was too, from the servants passing and repassing, but he could not understand much of it, as the language was a barbarous Canadian French. Tim could make out a few words here and there, but no sense.

They appeared to be busy preparing supper for some one in the carriage, for a camp-table was spread out beyond the fire, and dishes were being set out. Presently Tim heard a female voice from the carriage itself, crying: "*Françoise! Françoise! N'es tu pas prête encore?*"

The French maid jumped up with a quick: "*Oui, Madame la comtesse. Oui, toute de suite. On a servi.*"

Tim, though he did not understand, was yet struck with the difference of accent and purity of speech of the two females, from the rough *habitans* around them.

"Bedad, thim's French ladies," he said to himself, and watched anxiously to see what followed.

The smart French maid hurried to the carriage now, and assisted therefrom an elderly lady, whose face Tim could not plainly see, till she was seated at the table. Then the borderer had a full opportunity of inspecting face and figure, and the result increased his astonishment.

He beheld a distinguished and aristocratic-looking old lady, with a dark aquiline face and keen black eyes, her white hair built up in a tower, in the Pompadour style then prevalent, and surrounded by a black satin hood. The old lady was very richly dressed, jewels glittering on neck and hands, while the buckles of her

high-heeled shoes were set with diamonds. Something in her face seemed to be familiar to Tim, but he could not recall it clearly, and he watched the old lady with more than ordinary interest as she proceeded to sup, in a style of elegant and luxury such as Tim had never witnessed in the wilderness.

It was very tantalizing to Double-Death to be so near, to hear everything and not understand a word of the conversation, for the servants were all still now, and nothing was audible but the clear precise accents of the old lady as she spoke to Françoise, and the latter as she replied to her mistress.

Tim was beginning to think of returning to his horse, and letting the queer party go, when he heard the rapid foot of a man coming into camp on the other side, at the peculiar lope of an Indian, and in a moment more a tall, magnificently framed warrior, in the full regalia of an Indian chief, strode rapidly into the little camp, and grounded the butt of his long rifle in front of the table. His back was turned to Tim as he stood there, but the latter recognized his equipments at once, as belonging to the Senecas.

The old countess looked up, and without any apparent surprise, observed, quietly:

"*C'est bien toi, mon ami. Qu'est ce qui il y a de nouveau, ce soir?*"

The chief replied in broken French, which Murphy did not understand, and seemed to be giving an account of where he had been and what he had seen. Toward the end he glided into the Seneca language, as if the difficulty of a foreign tongue had become too irksome; and then Tim heard something that made him start and look round apprehensively.

"We found the track of a horse," the chief was saying, "and followed it to the river, where we found the beast tied to a tree, with no master. My warriors are on the master's trail now, but the night is so dark that they may not find him before morning. Otherwise the country is still, and there is no danger!"

"The eyes of my brother are clear, and he is a great warrior," replied the lady in the same tongue, which she seemed to speak like a native. "It is some scout or hunter perhaps, and if we catch him you know what to do."

"I know," said the Indian proudly. "Keep his tongue still. When the way is dark, and the tongue must be forked, the tomahawk settles the spy and the babbler. It is well. Let the queen sleep in peace. Her sons are around her camp to keep off the spy."

He turned away and left the camp, in the direction in which he had come. As for Tim, he had heard enough to realize that his horse was captured, and men on his own trail. As the Indian chief stood with his back to him, the borderer had more than once covered him with his rifle, almost resolved to shoot him, and escape in the confusion. And yet something restrained Tim's hand, what he could not have told you, which was but the instinctive reluctance to commit a cold-blooded murder. Although he had not seen the face of the Indian, yet there had been something so noble and stately in his appearance that Tim had involuntarily conceived quite an admiration for him. At the same time he realized that he had no time to lose in getting away from the dangerous vicinity of the camp, the more so as enemies were doubtless concentrating upon him already, and the chief was in all probability even now making a circuit of the camp, out of the dangerous glare of the firelight.

As noiselessly as he had come, Tim slipped away from the tree, and crawled off in the direction of his advance, till he thought himself safe, when he rose and looked back. The camp was all still and the servants were gathered near the table, while he could distinguish the form of the old lady leaning on a crutch-handled stick and moving slowly toward the carriage, assisted by Françoise, the maid.

It was evident that he had not been observed, and the borderer struck off through the woods toward the river, flitting silently from tree to tree, and leaving his old track to the right. In this he was but following an old Indian trick, doubling on his own trail so as to see who was following it. He also put the light of the fire beyond any of his pursuers, so that if they came forward they might be revealed to him.

Pretty soon, as he stole from tree to tree, he realized the benefit of his caution, when he caught sight of a little group of figures on the very place where he had been about an hour before, evidently following his track. It showed to what perfection their woodcraft must have arrived, to be able to follow the trail of a moccasin under the faint moonlight that came through the trees from above.

Tim chuckled quietly to himself, and placed his thumb to his nose, as he looked at the shadowy figures of the distant trailers. He could count seven men altogether, and had it not been for his horse, the daring borderer would have attacked them then and there, with the surprise in his favor. But Tim was too anxious to recover his animal to fire a shot. He knew that those in charge of the horse would be at once put on the alert by the noise, and

probably carry him off, while Tim was just as determined to get his steed back.

"And av there's no more than sivin av them," muttered Tim, "I'll go bail to bag the whole of them."

He crawled off between the trees, carefully keeping his body out of the speckled moonlight that lay on the greensward, and every now and then pausing to look back till the trailers were fairly between him and the fire. Then he rose to his feet and went swiftly off, flitting from tree to tree, till he reached the same trail once more, and stood in the footsteps of his pursuers, now broad and easily traced. He had determined to enter his own camp in that manner, as the Indians would be likely to guard all quarters better than that by which they expected their friends.

He stole rapidly along, till he began to recognize the swell of ground from which he had seen the fire, and he resolved, very prudently, that it was not advisable to cross this swell. The necessity of caution had become imperative.

He crept around the base of the swell instead, glancing ahead and upward as he went, till he came close to the spot where he had left his horse.

There stood the animal, tied to a tree, as he had left him, with the saddle and trappings lying by it exactly as he had left them, and not a trace of a human being near.

Tim Murphy put his finger on the side of his nose and muttered:

"Maybe ye think I'm a fule, Mr. Injun, and maybe ye'll find I ain't such a fule as I luk, bedad."

The astute scout was well aware that the seeming quietude of the scene was only a snare to draw him on, and that his approach to the horse would be a signal for a shot from the thicket. The question remained, how many Indians were on the watch for him, and whether he had been seen as yet. He was about sixty yards from the horse, and commenced a cautious circuit around the neighborhood, expecting every moment to see a dark form start from behind a tree, and the fight to begin. Tim was beginning to be puzzled, for the first time in his woodcraft, perhaps. Where the Indians were hidden was a mystery to him, until he happened to come once more to the foot of the little slope of ground, and look up against the sky line. The figures of four more Indians were to be seen in a group at the top, looking toward the distant fire.

In a moment Tim's resolution was taken. With a pistol in one hand and his rifle in the other, he crept cautiously up to the mound, to listen to what the savages were saying, for they appeared to be conversing. He succeeded by great artifice, in getting within less than thirty feet unheard, and then listened.

"The chief is gone long," said one. "He must be close on the heels of this hunter."

"We should have gone, too," said another. "The man will never be back for his horse. They will have his scalp before he gets here. Let us take the horse and go forward."

This was all Tim wanted. He had found out that they were the only ones he had to fear. Deliberately he rose to his feet, stepped boldly out and leveled his rifle. *CRACK! crack!* at that distance was sufficient, and two Indians dropped before a start was made by the other two. Then they both rushed forward in the direction of the flash, and were met by the cool and indomitable borderer, muzzle to muzzle. Before either could strike with their tomahawks, *crack! crack!* went the pistol right and left, and again Double-Death was triumphant by the power of coolness and pluck. All four of the Indians were dead or dying. The victor despoiled them of their scalps and ammunition, and then rode away unharmed, leaving the trailers to gnash their teeth at being so outwitted.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FRENCH COUNTESS.

FARMER NEILSON was sitting at the door of his house, proudly contemplating the remains of the breastworks to the right, and the block-house, which was dignified by the name of "Fort Neilson;" and the worthy farmer was expatiating to his wife and daughter as follows:

"I tell ye, Hannah Jane, 'tain't no use a-talkin'; these here fields are going to be famous some of these days. Things ain't as they used to was, wife, and when this here war's over, and you and I are in our graves, and Marian's an old grandma, with a hull bushel o' children around the door, then they'll be a-comin' to this 'ere place from all parts of the yearth, and want to see old John Neilson's house, whar the battle was fou't that sot Ameriky free."

"How you do go on, John!" said Mrs. Neilson, in a low voice. "Don't you know that Marian can't bear to hear of the battle now, that puts her in mind of poor Everard? You should be careful, John."

John Neilson was repentant at once, when he saw Marian turn away and enter the cottage, with her handkerchief at her eyes. He blundered out:

"Say, old woman, I didn't mean to do that. I'll go and tell her I didn't."

* "Fanny! Fanny! Are you not ready yet?"

"Yes, madame the countess, yes, in a minute. Supper's ready."

"That's you, my friend. What news to-night?"

"Leave her alone, John," said the wife, sharply. "She wants to be left alone these days, that's all."

Mrs. Neilson came of a station somewhat superior to her husband, and made him feel the weight of her character in their married life, so that honest John was forced to be silent and submit.

Presently as he sat in the sun, meditatively puffing his old Powhatan pipe, the rumble of wheels was heard on the road from Quaker Spring. The sound was one but rarely heard in those days, when the country was so unsettled.

"Who in thunder kin that be?" exclaimed honest John, as a large, heavy coach, the body painted yellow, with a black hood, hove in sight. The vehicle was drawn by four horses, and was accompanied by two men on horseback, in immense boots, and hats to match, with blue livery coats turned up with red. Such an equipage had not been seen around Bemis's Heights for many a long year, not since the prime days of Sir William Johnson, though its pattern was still common enough in Quebec.

John Neilson and his wife both watched this vehicle approach them with great surprise, fully expecting it, however, to go on to Albany. Instead of this, it halted at their own gate, and the face of an old lady appeared at the window, a dignified, aristocratic face, with white hair rolled back from a high, narrow forehead.

"Vill you please tell me," said the old lady, in a soft, melodious tone of voice, with an exceedingly winning smile, "if Monsieur Jean Neilson live anywere about here?"

John Neilson started forward in a moment. "That's me, marm. What kin I do for you, marm?"

"Very much, monsieur," said the old lady, smiling sweetly. "I'm told by my dear friend, the Marquis de la Fayette, dat you are de person of all oders to make inquiry for de bataille dat take place 'ere last year. I am la Comtesse de Montouraine, monsieur, and I shall be very grateful for your help, ven I write de account of my travels on return to France."

Honest John Neilson turned triumphantly to his wife, saying:

"Hannah Jane, what did I tell yer? Didn't I say as the folks would be comin' to John Neilson to hear about the battle? Old woman, go into the house. What do you know about war?"

Then he turned round to the countess, full of smiles, not that John adored rank—Americans are never supposed to do that—but it's not every day a real live countess comes to a farmer's door to ask a favor, and a favor that made John feel six inches taller in the granting of it.

"I'm the man that kin tell yer all about it, marm," he said, proudly. "General Poor had his quarters in my kitchen, and I kin show ye Gates and Burgoyne's place, not an hour's walk from here, marm. But ye'll need daylight to see it in, marm. We hain't got much to offer in our little place, marm, but, sich as it is, if yer ladyship will be pleased to walk in, I guess we kin put ye up for the night, and make ye comfortable, and show ye over the field in the morning."

"I thank you," said the old countess, smiling again. "I will not trouble you much, monsieur, for I have slept in my carriage since we be traveling; but, if you will permit me to partake of your supper with your familiee, I shall consider it a great favor."

"Sartinly, marm, sartinly," said John, heartily. "Walk right in, marm, and make yourself to hum. Here, Marian, child, come and help the lady."

As he spoke, Marian, somewhat curious, no doubt, came shyly out of the house, to help the grand stranger from her carriage. The old lady descended slowly, resting her hands, very small and beautiful still, on the gold crutch head of an ebony cane. The fingers were all covered with jewels, and, as she leaned on Marian to enter the house, she bore the appearance of a frail, delicate old lady of the proud noblesse of France, aristocratic to her finger-tips.

Marian was so shy and embarrassed at the presence of this imposing lady, that she hardly dared to look at her face for some time, and then she was called away by father and mother to attend to preparing supper, and that no light meal, but one for about a dozen persons. For it turned out that the countess had, besides herself and the two outriders, two more postillions, two footmen, and a smart French maid, Francoise by name, who insisted on helping "Mademoiselle Marian" with her preparations, and jabbering broken English to her, in praise of "dat dear comtesse, dat sweet comtesse," all the while.

Whenever Marian came near the countess, the latter professed to be enraptured with her, and confused her dreadfully with profuse compliments, all of which kept Marian too busy to examine the countess critically till after darkness had set in, and candles were lit. It was not till the dishes were washed and put away, and a hush had come on the little household, that the girl took an opportunity for a good, long look at their new friend. Something in the face seemed familiar to her, and yet she

could not tell what it was. Before she could settle it in her own mind, the sharp black eyes of the old lady flashed a merry, wicked glance at her.

"Ah, my little cat!" said the countess, smiling; "so you would look at the old lady for a while, to see if you like her? Well, my child, they used to tell me I was pretty once, and I believed it, but no one calls me a pretty old lady any more now. Dat is all gone, just like your bloom vill fade some day, child, and you will be old and wrinkled like me. Monsieur Neilson, indeed you have von very pretty little daughter dere—*charmante, monsieur, charmante!*"

"Marian is well enough, madam," said the mother, stiffly, "but she is not used to being flattered so much."

"Ah, *ciel!*" cried the French lady. "Is it possible? Why, madame, at her age I was called an angel fifty times a day by fifty different cavaliers, and I told them I believed them all. You must positively let me have that little Marian in the carriage with me to-morrow, when we drive over the field of battle, Monsieur Neilson. Indeed, I am in love wid her."

"Sartinly, marm," said honest John, who was in high feather that night; and so it was arranged that the next morning Marian should go in the carriage with the countess, while her father rode alongside to explain the objects of interest.

And, that settled, they went to bed, Marian's last thoughts being:

"Where have I seen the countess before?"

And she could not answer her own question.

CHAPTER XV.

TIM'S JOURNEY.

WHEN Tim Murphy mounted his horse that night and rode away, he was fully aware that he had a dangerous foe on his track, in the person of the Seneca chief and his seven followers. He judged that they were not the men to leave their comrades unavenged, and that it would be prudent to put as much space between them as possible. He also foresaw that it was necessary to change his own appearance somewhat, and to that end he carried off with him the garments of the Indians, selecting the best articles from each. Then he turned his horse into the river, and struck boldly out for the opposite shore, although in several places the animal had to swim. Arrived at the other side, Tim rode off through the woods till he came to a hollow, when he tied his horse, and returned to the bank on foot, to watch the opposite shore.

"Bedad, av they don't come over," quoth Tim to himself, "I may as well camp here for the night, and get a little wink of sleep, and av they try to come, bedad, I'll heel 'em over as they swim, the painted devils."

He waited patiently for some minutes, and soon heard the death-howl set up on the other side of the river, announcing that the chief or his trailers had found the scalped bodies of their comrades. As he had anticipated, in a little while more they appeared in the moonlight on the opposite bank, following the broad trail of the horse's track down to the water's edge. It was an easy shot for Tim, and he was sorely tempted to try it, as they stood huddled together, apparently discussing whether to cross the river or not. Tim counted the seven trailers, but the tall form of the chief was not there, and he concluded that they were afraid to venture across without orders. After waiting a little longer, he heard a rustle in the bushes, and the tall chief made his appearance, while a hush fell on the Indians. The chief was heard questioning them, and the whole band stood hesitating for a while, till the chief suddenly dashed into the water, and came swimming across the river, followed by the rest.

"Now, ye red devils, av I don't make ye howl, may I never fire another shot," muttered Double-Death, when they were fairly in the water.

He took out his pistols and laid them deliberately on the bank before him, rested his rifle on the foot of a tree, and waited. Tim was one of those cool hands who never throw away a chance. A younger soldier would have fired at the heads bobbing in the current, and missed them in the moonlight, probably frightening them back and leaving them to follow him later. This was not Tim's programme. He had just six shots and he meant to reserve them all for close quarters and demoralizing his enemies. The river was narrow and swift, and he knew that the arms of the Indians would certainly be wet and useless when they reached the bank, while they were as clearly ignorant of his presence, or they would have never dared to cross. Very soon the line of heads came nearer and nearer, being swept down the current till it was evident that they would land almost at his feet. The scout waited till four dripping figures rose out of the water, and stood waist deep, panting with exertion. Then he fired right and left, with the aim that never missed, and two of the Indians instantly dropped into the river, and were swept away by the current. The third, who was the tall chief, as swiftly followed, and dived, thereby escaping a bullet from Tim's pistol, but the fourth got it somewhere in the body, and fell struggling and howling into the

water. Tim picked up his other pistol, and fired at the remaining heads in the water, but all three ducked at the flash, and he had the mortification of seeing the Indians climb up the further bank unharmed, before he could reload his three weapons. When he had done so, he started down the bank to intercept the chief, if the latter should make any attempt to land on his side. He saw his head in the middle of the river, and heard the roaring of some rapids a little distance below. The chief seemed to think discretion the better part of valor, for he made the best of his way to the other side, while Double-Death returned to his horse and took him into the thickest part of the woods. There, hidden in a dense thicket of underwood that announced the former presence of clearings, the bold scout passed the night, and slept soundly till the pale light of dawn woke him in the morning, feeling convinced that he had effectually frightened his foes.

Then he awoke much refreshed, saddled and fed his horse, ate some food, and started on a tour of inspection down the river bank. As he expected, there were no tracks. The sudden occurrence of six shots in succession the evening before, when the Indians had only tracked one man, had aroused their superstition, and they began to whisper that it must be the dreaded warrior, Double-Death, who was reputed to fire all day long without loading.

As soon as Tim was satisfied that he was alone on the south bank of the Mohawk, he returned to his horse, and rode boldly away through the country, following the old Indian paths, and passing almost within sight of the block-house at Fort Plain, which he did not visit, however. He was too anxious to keep his coming and going a secret, and too anxious also to get on with his journey. There were many signs of Indian parties around, camp-fires and such like, but they were all many days old, and Tim had resolved to push forward in spite of them. By evening he had made sixty miles more, and was in the very heart of the trackless wilderness, abandoned even by the Indians themselves, who had clustered around the lakes of the Genesee valley.

That night the scout ventured to make a fire, very small, and of dry wood and punk, that glowed fiercely without flaming. He built it in the midst of a dry swamp, in a hollow tree, and stabled his horse under a spreading hemlock, in warmth and peace. Both man and horse required rest now, the latter especially, for their journey had been rapid, and where they were, was safety.

It was not until late the next day that Tim started on his westward journey, and when he did, he had completely metamorphosed his appearance. Instead of the soberly-dressed ranger of Morgan's Corps, he had been transformed into an Indian on the war-path, plumed and painted, with a gay scarlet blanket hanging from his shoulders. In this guise, he rode boldly into the Indian country next day, careless of who saw him at a distance, and resolved to pass himself off as the returning member of a war-party, who had slain Double-Death and taken his weapons. That afternoon he rode south-west, till evening brought him in sight of the extreme end of Lake Cayuga, the present site of the town of Ithaca, then occupied by an Indian village. Tim halted on a hill that overlooked the rich alluvial flats on which the village was built. He saw cornfields, several square miles in extent, fruitful orchards and neat frame houses, with plenty of stock in the fields near the houses, and he thought it most prudent not to venture into the village that night. He knew the tribe to be Cayugas, and he knew, moreover, that if Everard was alive anywhere, it would probably be in the Seneca country, where Queen Esther's band belonged. So Mr. Murphy retired into the forest with great prudence, found a dry swamp, his common place of refuge, and dealt out to his horse the last feed of oats in the sack. Soon after dark, however, he stole out on foot, went down to the cornfields and plucked about thirty ears, with which he stole back undiscovered to feast his horse.

"After all," soliloquized Tim that night as he smoked a quiet pipe, keeping the spark in the bowl carefully hidden under his hat, for fear of its catching the eye of a passing Indian, "after all, 'tisn't such a hard job to bate an Injun in cunnin'. Now here's Tim Murphy, all alone, in the middle of their country, and sorra one of them knows where he is, this blissed minute, or he wouldn't kape a whole scalp long, I'm think in."

And with a quiet philosophy, born of his coolness and self-reliance, Tim composed himself to sleep, in the swamp, within less than a mile of a village of Indians, all his deadly enemies.

But no harm came to him. On the contrary, the rest and food had so invigorated his horse, that the animal seemed as fresh as when it left the Neilsons, having been unable to finish the bountiful supply of corn given it by Tim. The borderer ate his last mouthful of food, mounted his horse, and then pursued his journey, down the plain Indian road that led to Lake Seneca and the settlement of Sheshequin.

He rode rapidly all day, expecting to be met by plenty of Indians, but to his surprise none of

them seemed to be about. Tim had adopted the distinctive marks of the Mohawk tribe, now that he was going among the Senecas, as the former were allies, at some distance from the latter, and he ran less risk of detection by members of the same tribe. He knew, moreover, that Brant, with the Mohawks, was on the war-path somewhere to the north of the Mohawk river. The absence of all the Senecas seemed to indicate that they too were away on some expedition, and everything looked favorable to Tim's plan.

He boldly followed the broad trail, that led him through forest scenes of surpassing beauty, now among stately rows of gigantic oaks, then among groves of the sweet smelling sugar-maples, or under the deep, cool shade of hickory and walnut tree, till at last he emerged at the edge of a gently rounded slope, and beheld before him the laughing valley of Sheshequin, golden with ripe corn, and covered with orchards of apple, pear, and peach, in rich profusion.

Through the midst of this smiling, undulating plain, girdled with primeval forests, ran a winding path, trodden for centuries; and into this path rode Double-Death, with perfect coolness. As he went on he kept his eye fixed on the village ahead, expecting to see a dozen warriors start out on horseback or afoot to inspect the stranger. But none were visible. The sharp eyes of the children spied him first, and they ran into the wigwams and houses to call their mothers, but as Tim tranquilly advanced, there seemed to be no warriors left.

He rode up into the very midst of the village before he saw a male creature of any kind, and then he was greeted by an aged, white-haired chief, who was sitting on the steps of one of the houses, smoking. The squaws Tim had not deigned to notice, true to his assumed character.

The old Indian saluted Tim gravely. "My son is far out of the track," he said. "The warriors of Sheshequin are gone with the brothers of my son's tribe to hunt the pale-faces, with Brant and the White Chief of Caughnawaga.* My son should be with them, and not showing clean weapons before women."

Tim showed at his belt the scalps of five Indians, and answered:

"Black Wolf has been on the war-path, and left his brothers behind. He has slain the thieving Oneida that clings to the rebel, and has scalped the white chief they call Double-Death. Behold his weapons."

And he held up the celebrated rifle that had gained him the name of Double-Death. The old chief looked surprised.

"No man has ever wounded Double-Death before," he said; "and are you the man to take his scalp?"

"Here it is," said Tim, coolly.

As he spoke he held up one of the scalps of which he had cut the hair short, so as to resemble that of a white man.

"Let the Senecas and Mohawks go," he continued. "Black Wolf fights alone, and rides in the forest without help. When did the warriors depart, and which road took they?"

He was anxious to find out the destination of the expedition, but did not dare to show his anxiety, for fear of exciting his hearer's suspicions.

"They went four days ago, and took the northern track from Niagara to Caughnawaga," said the old Indian.

"Ah! then I should be too late to follow them," said Tim. He had found out the reason of his unopposed march. The Indians were on the war-path on the north bank of the Mohawk.

"And the white prisoner of Queen Sheshequin," he pursued, carelessly; "where is he?"

"He is here," replied the Indian, "with the Spy Queen."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE GLEN.

Tim was nonplused. The Spy Queen! If Queen Esther was here, he knew her well enough to be certain he would be recognized, in spite of his disguise.

"And did not Queen Sheshequin go forth with her warriors to the north," he asked, "as well as to the south? Has she grown too old to march?"

"Not so," said the Indian, gravely. "Queen Sheshequin went before her warriors, with Black Eagle and twelve braves. She went by the south road to Cherry Valley, and thence to the field of the great battle last year. She went in the great wagon given her by the White Chief of Caughnawaga. My brother may have met her on the road."

Tim was too guarded to exhibit surprise, but his heart gave a great leap at the news.

"Ay, ay, I saw her," he said, indifferently. "But she was well disguised, for I knew her not. And the Spy Queen—where is she?"

"Up Sheshequin Glen, with the young white prisoner," said the Indian, with some little

* Sir John Johnson, son of Sir William, the old Indian agent. The Indian name of Johnstown was Caughnawaga, and the Johnsons were accounted chiefs among the tribes.

scorn. "The Great Father is foolish to trust his business to squaws, for she does nothing all day but walk with the young stranger. But then we are civil to her, because without her the Great Father will send us no more presents, and she has promised us many rifles and much rum."

Tim could hardly restrain his eagerness to be off, but he was hearing too much news not to endeavor to hear more. The old Seneca was perfectly unsuspecting, and seemed to have lost the usual Indian caution in the garrulity of age. The Spy Queen was evidently an agent of the British Government among the Indians, and Tim formed the bold design of carrying her off, the instant he heard of it. It was only necessary to ascertain whether Everard Barbour and the white prisoner were the same person.

"The white prisoner is the one taken by Black Eagle near Pocono, is he not?" he asked.

"Ay," said the Indian, readily. "A young boy from the camp of the rebel soldiers, not worth keeping. But the Spy Queen seems to be fond of him, and dresses him up as a chief of the Senecas."

Tim had found out all he wanted to know. "It is well!" he said, abruptly. "The way of Black Wolf is long and the night is coming. He goes to the lodges of his people to the north. Farewell."

"Will not my brother rest at Sheshequin for the night?" asked the old Indian, courteously. "White Raven has a house, and it is open to his Mohawk brothers."

"Black Wolf rides alone," said Double-Death, gravely. "When his foot is on the war-path he enters no house. He will but gather a few ears of corn for the horse he took from the pale-face chief, and then he will ride homeward to the lodges of his people."

White Raven made no opposition when he heard this, for the Indian will sometimes take whimsical vows, like the knights errant of old, and their compeers respect them. Double-Death galloped out of the village at full speed, and plunged into the woods toward the north, leaving the quiet hamlet to relapse into the same quiet in which he had found it. He kept on his way to the north, the home of the Mohawk tribes, till he was at a safe distance and the sun was growing low in the west. Then he sought his old place of concealment, a dry swamp, and fastened his horse securely in the midst of a natural stable, formed by two or three huge, spreading spruce trees that completely sheltered the animal. He had plucked a huge bundle of corn on the way, as he had announced to White Raven, and he threw down the green ears before the horse, saying:

"Ate as much as ye like, ye baste, and don't let a word out of yer head, av yer don't want yer hide tanned afore ye're did. D'ye mind that now? Ye'll have a good tramp to-night, carrying double, av we have any luck at all, so ate yer fill."

Then Double-Death looked to his weapons, and struck off through the woods to the foot of the bold, rounded swells that surrounded the valley of Sheshequin. It was his object to enter the glen from above, for he had a good idea of the way there, having often heard it described by the Indians.

The warriors being away from the village rendered his expedition all the more feasible, as the squaws seldom wandered far from the lodges. In less than half an hour he was at the foot of the ridge, which was covered, like all the rest of the land, with a heavy pall of forest.

The climb was a fatiguing one, but the view from the top was ample repayment, if Tim had been romantically inclined. He was not, however, and all the glories of a fall sunset over miles of dark forest, open plain and poetical lake were wasted upon him. The scout turned from it, and ran off through the woods that crowned the ridge, till the trickling of waters ahead warned him that he was approaching the glen.

In a few minutes more he came out of the woods and stood on the brink of a tiny, round pool, as black as jet, into which on one side ran a little stream, which left it on the other, and disappeared in a cleft in the earth. Tim had come upon the true beginning of the lovely glen of Sheshequin, and stood at the source of all its wonders.

A crimson ray of the setting sun shone through an arch of the wood across the pool, and lighted up the dark cleft into which the stream fell with a stifled roar, casting up a shower of white spray against the bare cliffs of black rock, molded into fantastic buttresses and towers, by the artificer, nature, her tools being water and time.

From where the borderer stood he could see the stream, winding and leaping downward, by successive stages, into the bowels of the earth, the cliffs growing bolder at every leap. Tim hesitated no more, but swung himself down into the first hollow, a descent of not more than four feet, and commenced the descent of the glen. It was not difficult. The stratification of the limestone and shale, of which the sides of the glen were composed, was perfectly horizontal, and the steps taken by the water gradual and easy. At first not over ten feet wide, the glen swelled out into a succession of little chambers,

contracting here and there into narrow passages, as some harder rock stood up in a sturdy column, denying a free passage to the stream, which undermined it and formed a shallow cavern, from the edge of which depended a glittering curtain of drops in a rainbow veil.

The borderer kept on down the stream, thinking but little of the singular beauties of the scene, for he was expecting every moment to come upon Everard. He passed in this manner through a succession of fantastic and beautiful glens, each more beautiful than the other, till a long, narrow, winding passage at last brought him out into the large rocky amphitheater, in which stood the house of queen Esther.

When Tim entered this, the sun had set, and night fallen on the stream and all the surroundings. In that place, shut in by lofty walls of rock, it was already too dark to distinguish faces or figures, and Tim could see that lights were burning in the house, and that the inclosure round was empty. Without more delay the scout stepped softly forward, and found himself under the windows of the house, looking into the basement. The light came from one of the windows opening on a gallery above, that ran round the house Swiss fashion. Tim first made sure that no one was down-stairs. Doors and windows were alike wide open in the careless freedom of security, and the soft, moccasined tread of the scout made no sound on the bare boards of the floor. Tim made a complete exploration of the four empty rooms that composed the basement, before he proceeded upstairs; and then he went round by the outside staircase. He expected every moment to hear the alarm scream of a squaw, and kept his eyes warily open in all directions. There was no one on the gallery. So far, so good. The light came from a window at the other end of the house, and he crept softly along till he came opposite, before he ventured to peep in.

When he did, he could hardly restrain an exclamation of delight.

There was his long-sought, favorite officer, Everard Barbour, alive and well, within twelve feet of him.

But what a changed being was Everard!

He was clothed in the full gala dress of an Indian chief, but made of more splendid materials than usual, for real jewels glittered on his bare arms and neck, and his leggings and moccasins were of velvet. The feather head-dress into which his fair hair was woven was more splendid than anything Tim had ever seen, and the youth wore a tomahawk and scalp-knife, both heavily mounted with silver. But all this was nothing to the dress of his companion, a tiny lady, with long golden hair, who had one arm twined around Everard's neck in familiar fashion.

"Be the howly poker!" muttered Tim, under his breath, as he surveyed her, "she's a rare beauty, so she is. Och! Miss Marian, sure an' yer heart would ache this blissid minute, could ye see Misther Everard—och, the crather, av she isn't kissin' him!"

And, indeed, it was true. The little lady, whose beauty seemed almost unearthly in that wild place, was actually kissing Everard. Tim was puzzled at her looks and dress. In form and fashion it resembled that of the Indians, but it was cut with a peculiar grace that showed the hand of a foreign dressmaker, and made of expensive silks and velvets. The borderer could not understand who she could be.

"Bedad, av that's the Spy Queen," he muttered, "it's not Tim Murphy that'll be takin' away any such purty crature to be hung for a spy, I'avin' the quistion of possibility intirely. Hoigh! what's the matter?"

The little lady had jumped up, saying:

"I'll run and get it immediately, pet," and so vanished out of the room.

"Now's the time," thought Tim. He put his head round the corner, and gave utterance to the whisper:

"Liftin'ant, I'm here—Tim Murphy. Run, ye devil! Now's yer time afore she comes back."

CHAPTER XVII.

A REVELATION.

On a bright, lovely morning, rather more than a year from the date of the battle of Bemis's Heights, John Neilson rode out beside the lumbering carriage of the Countess of Montouraine, where the countess herself sat with pretty Marian Neilson. The old lady had succeeded in charming every one in the house, even Mrs. Neilson, who had been disposed to be stiff at first in her manner. She effected that lady's conquest by liberal praise of a wonderful breakfast cake that Mrs. Neilson was particularly proud of manufacturing.

When the countess insisted on her putting up a number of these for a lunch on the road, Mrs. Neilson was very much flattered, and expressed her opinion that the countess was a sensible woman after all, "none of your fine stuck-up French fallals, who think themselves too good to eat plain farmers' fare."

Mrs. Neilson did put up an immense package for lunch, and the countess accepted them with profuse thanks.

The carriage, with John Neilson riding beside

it, took the road as far as the deserted house of John Barbour, which Marian could no longer behold without a shudder, and then turned off across the fields to Burgoyne's old lines. On the way the countess pressed Marian to tell her the cause of her shudder, and the poor girl hurriedly told her the outlines of her own and Everard's sad story.

"And now, madam," she said, weeping, "I know not if he be dead or alive, and oh! madam, I wish I knew for certain. I would go to him if he was in prison; indeed I would, and share his prison; but I fear he has been murdered by those cruel Indians, and I shall never see him again."

As she said these words, the old countess turned and regarded her with a strange look.

"You are very fond of this young man?" she asked, abruptly.

"Madam, we are engaged to be married," said Marian, simply.

The countess took a pinch of snuff and shook her head.

"Hum!" she ejaculated; "the one does not always follow the other, child. Does your father approve of it?"

"Yes, madam, and mother, too," said Marian, eagerly.

"And the young man," said the countess, abruptly. "Has he a father?"

"Yes, madam," said Marian, in a low tone.

"Indeed, and why is he not at home?"

"I don't know," said Marian, a little confused.

"Does he approve of the match?" asked the countess, turning her sharp eyes on Marian's blushing face. "I mean the father."

"N—n—no," the girl unwillingly admitted.

"Why not?"

"He is a Tory," said Marian, in a low voice, "and we are patriots. So is Everard, poor dear, and he has left his father's house in anger."

"So!" said the old lady, in a dry tone. "Is there no other reason?"

Marian blushed deeper than ever, and a look of resentment came over her features.

"There was one other reason," she said, very low. "Mr. Barbour was very proud of his family, and he thought us beneath him."

The countess took another pinch of snuff, and turned to John Neilson, who was just then riding up to the door.

"This here place, marm," said John, "is the place where one of our ginerals was hit in the leg, when them darned Hessians got licked in the redoubt. He war carried off, marm, by Major Armstrong and a young feller of this neighborhood—"

And John stopped suddenly, as he remembered his wife's injunction not to mention Everard's name before Marian.

"What was the young man's name, monsieur?" asked the countess.

"Wal," said John, awkwardly, "his name were—mind, Marian, I didn't go fur to hurt yer feelin's, my gal, but the lady axed me—his name were Everard Barbour, marm. Yer see, there were some spoonin' atwixt him and my gal there, and she feels mortal bad about it, marm, just now she do, 'cause the poor young feller got sculped by the Injuns of that darned old witch Queen Esther, down in Wyoming. The poor little gal was down thur herself, marm, and see'd all the horrors of the massacree, she did, and kin tell yer all about the bloody varmint, marm."

The countess turned round to Marian.

"And so you were at Wyoming," she said; "and how did you escape from dat old witch, Queen Esther, as your father calls her?"

"Nay, indeed, she was kind to me, father," said Marian, half apologetically. "At least I was not killed like so many others."

"Aha!" said the countess. "So de old witch, Queen Esther, was not so bad to you, after all."

"She were bad enough in all conscience, marm," said honest John, indignantly. "My gal seen her with her own eyes kill sixteen men, and they standin' tied in a row. She tuk a hatchet, and brained 'em one after another, till she come to Tim Murphy, the same feller as saved my gal, and he bruk loose and run, with all the painted devils arter him, am' the old she devil cheerin' 'em on. Oh! I'd like to get my grip on her skinny old throat, so I would."

The old countess seemed to be amused at the warmth of the farmer.

"Ah! monsieur," she said, placidly, "I do not know moch about dese t'ings, you know, but dey tell me dat dis Queen Esthaire have one grand cause for revenge against de French and deir ally, de Americans. I nevair hear dat she cruel to de womans or child's."

"Nay, I'll own that," said John Neilson, honest even to an enemy. "She treated my gal fust rate, and I take all that back about throtlin' her myself; but, I tell you, she'd better not let Tim Murphy ketch her. He got off safe, and slew'd a Injun as had stole his rifle, as he calls Double-Death, and he's down on her, is Tim. He's a Irisher, to be sure, and them ain't expected to do as much as born Amerikins, but Tim's a good feller, and he reskied my gal like a good feller, marm."

"Well, monsieur," said the countess, changing the subject; "so dis is de field of de great bat-

taille? And how far, monsieur, is it to Saratoga?"

"About two miles," said John.

"And are dere any houses on de way dere?" asked the countess, quietly.

"Very few, marm. This here cross-road runs into the Quaker Springs Road, back of Wilber's Basin, and then yer come right into the woods, and no houses till Cherry Valley. They say that the Injuns has been seen hangin' round 'bout them clearin's, and we don't care to go very far that ways."

"Let us drive into dat road, monsieur?" said the countess, suddenly; "and so come home by the way we came."

"Sartinly, marm," said John, readily.

"Here, fellers, this way."

And the carriage went bumping around the stumps to the cross dirt-road he had mentioned which ran back of Burgoyne's old line through a dense wood, John riding by the carriage window and expatiating on the battle of the previous year.

When they were in the thickest part of the woods, the countess suddenly rose in her seat, remarkably erect for an old lady, and cried out:

"Stop, mes enfants, stop!"

Instantly the postillions pulled up and the two lackeys leaped down from the box to the ground, as if awaiting orders to open the door. John Neilson pulled up, a little surprised at the halt in such a place, but he came up to the window immediately when the old lady beckoned to him. At the same moment the two outriders crowded their horses in, so as to press his animal close to the wheels of the carriage.

"Monsieur Neilson," said the old countess, in a clear, stern voice, very different from what she had used, "we will stop here, and you will be dismount, if you please. I want your daughter to go with me, monsieur."

A dim idea crossed John's brain that the countess was crazy, but her next words dispelled it, and brought a faint shriek from Marian.

"She is no longer your daughter, but mine, sare. And I am de old witch, de she-devil dat you talk of but now, monsieur. I am Catherine Montour, Queen Sheshequin, Queen of the Senecas, and you are my prisoner."

For one moment John Neilson was paralyzed. The next he turned round and would have struck down his captors outside, when he found himself covered by the muzzles of two horse-pistols in the hands of two stolid-looking French-Canadian outriders, while his bridle was firmly grasped by one of them.

"Resistance is folly, monsieur," said Queen Esther. "I have a mind to show you that I can be merciful as well as fierce. Take him off his horse and do as I told you."

The last words were addressed to the outriders, who seemed to understand them, for they nodded. Poor John Neilson was forced to hold out his hands, when a pair of handcuffs were fitted on them, and he was taken off his horse and into the thick wood out of sight of his agonized daughter.

Poor Marian sat as if she had been turned to stone, helpless and resigned, too much stunned to speak.

The false countess turned with a malignant smile, and observed:

"So we are met again, Marian Neilson. I shall now take you where no American expedition can follow you, into the heart of our country. Let me see Double-Death rescue you there. Keep up your spirits there, girl. I am taking you to your lover. But you will find him changed, or I mistake much. He has forgotten you, fool that you are, and so you will have the less reluctance to marry the chief I have chosen for you. Your father will not be hurt. The men have bound him to a tree and gagged him. That is all. Here they come. Allons!"

And away rolled the clumsy coach on the Quaker Springs Road, carrying Marian a helpless prisoner.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PAROLE OF HONOR.

EVERARD BARBOUR gave a violent start when Tim addressed him so suddenly through the window. He ejaculated, in a low voice:

"Heavens, Tim! How got you here? If you are found you will be killed!"

"Kilt!" said the scout, disdainfully; "and what wid? Sure there's nothing but squaws and childer here. Come out, liftinant, and I'll get ye out of this in no time at all, at all."

Everard trembled, and looked apprehensively round.

"I can not, Murphy," he whispered. "I am on parole."

"And what's that?" asked Tim, innocently.

"I have given my word not to escape," said Everard, sadly. "If there were ten thousand troops in the valley, I should be bound to flee with the Indians."

"Bedad, and that's quare," said Tim, reflectively. "And av I may make bould, who's the little lady beyant?"

"That," said Everard, hesitating, "that is—my adopted sister."

"Wisha now!" said Double-Death, dryly; "and she's mighty affectionate for a sither,

liftinant. Would she like another brother now?"

Everard frowned impatiently.

"No, sir. I have told you that I am on parole, and cannot escape. You must go back where you came from, or you may lose your life here. Go, before Miss Lacy comes back, or you may repent it."

Tim Murphy, instead of obeying the order, which was given imperiously, deliberately entered the room, and grounded the butt of his rifle with a clang on the floor.

"Bedad and I'll do no sich thing," he said, gravely. "Whin an officer is a prisoner, liftinant, we're not bound to obey his ordhers. I didn't come all this way to find ye for nothin', and, bedad, I'm not goin' back wid a fool's answer. Miss Marian's home, cryin' her eyes out, thinkin' ye dead, and I couldn't l'ave the poor cr'ature to think that. Will I be goin' now to tell her that I found ye kissin' a pretty Tory lady, and that ye wouldn't come back to yer duty whin ye had a chance?"

"Murphy, you don't understand these things," said Everard, impatiently. "I tell you, when an officer has given his parole not to escape, he can not break it. He must give up the parole and submit to be confined, before he can escape. As for Miss Neilson, I am perfectly true to her yet, but I can not break my parole."

"I know all that," said the scout. "Well, liftinant, then ye must give up yer parole, that's all, and, bedad, I'll resky ye."

"It can not be," said Everard, firmly. "There is not a warrior in the valley, and it would be a mere mockery for me to resign my parole now. No, Tim, I know you mean well, but I must remain here till the warriors return, and escape then, if I can. For yourself, let me entreat you to go and tell Marian I am alive and love her as well as ever. You will be discovered in a moment more if you stay."

"He is discovered," said a voice at that minute, and Charlotte Lacy stood on the low sill of the French window that opened on the piazza, within two feet of the form of Double-Death. Tim wheeled round and confronted her, standing speechless before the extraordinary beauty of the mysterious girl.

"Who are you, sir?" asked the lady, tranquilly. "Your dress is that of an Indian, but you seem to be a white man for all that. Who are you?"

"Faith, and yer ladyship has heard me name many a time," said Tim, proudly. "The praste he called me Timothy, and me father's name was Murphy, and I'll go bail yer ladyship has heard the Injuns tell of Double-Death, the scout, of Morgan's Rangers."

The lady came forward and laid a tiny hand on his arm.

"And are you Double-Death, the famous scout?" she asked, in a tone of great interest. "You are a bold man to come here alone. What do you want?"

"I want to take the liftinant here, away wid me," said Tim, boldly. "I came all the way from Saratoga, and now, bedad, he won't go. He says he's on parole, and can't escape."

"It is true," said the lady, with a smile. "Did you think he would have been left alone here, if I had not trusted his honor? Without me, he would have been burned at the stake long ago. In gratitude to me, he has given his parole. Let me see you make him break it."

"And sure yer ladyship wouldn't want a bit of a b'y, the likes o' him," said the Irish ranger, coaxingly. "What good will he do ye now? Sure ye might better let him come wid ould Tim, me lady, and I'll go bail he'll niver shoot another Injun ag'in. There's all his family cryin' for him, bedad, and I promised his poor ould mother I'd bring him home, and av yer ladyship would only let him go, it's Tim Murphy'll pray the Lord to bless yer beautiful face every blessed night on me bare and binded knees, miss. Arrah now, me lady, sure and the kind heart bames out of thim iligant blue eyes, so it does; and sure yer ladyship won't refuse the request of a dacent boy, so ye won't; and all that lies in the way of fradom and honor for the lad is a wee word from thim rosy lips, me lady, and sure yer ladyship'll spake it, won't ye now?"

Tim, in his wish to be insinuating, had drawn very near the nonchalant-looking little lady, who stood, smiling with suppressed amusement, on the sill of the window.

"Will you stay in his place?" asked the lady, quietly. "If you will, I will give him back his parole. I might take you prisoner, even now, cautious as you are, and great warrior as you think yourself. Four rifles cover you now, Double-Death, and only my body shields you from them."

"Then, be the powers, ye'd better stay where ye are," said Tim, coolly.

As he spoke, with a rapid movement he placed both hands on the delicate shoulders of the girl, and kept her between him and the window. She made no resistance, but Everard advanced and angrily shook off the scout's grasp, saying:

"Hands off that lady, Murphy. Don't be a fool."

Tim released his hold sulkily.

"Av you're ag'in' me too, liftinant, I might as well go. Tim Murphy isn't blind, but he

can see that a purty face is makin' a turncoat of ye. Let yer people shoot, me lady, and see how much I mind thim."

And he snapped his fingers derisively.

Charlotte Lacy laughed.

"I don't want to kill you," she said, quietly. "You have made me no answer yet. Will you take Everard's place on parole if I let him go back to his own forces in Philadelphia?"

"Take his place, is it?" asked Tim, scratching his head. "But does yer ladyship suppose that a lot of squaws could kape me in here, if he was once gone?"

"I do," said the girl, quietly. "But you must give up your arms, and submit to be bound, before he goes. Will you do it?"

Tim shook his head.

"Ye're thyring to come Dalilah over me, me lady," he said. "How'll I know that he'll go whin ye tell him? He may have turned traitor, and bedad it looks like it."

"You will have my word," said she, calmly. "If you will not do it, go. Once outside this room, your life is in your own hands to defend. There are more enemies here than you dream of."

"Me lady," said Tim, shrewdly, "Brag's a good dog, but ye see I've been all through the country round here, and I know there's not a warrior in Sheshequin. Av ye mane to frighten me with squaws—"

"Enough," she said, haughtily. "You have tried to induce your officer to break his parole, given to me, and I have spared your life so far. Now surrender, or die!"

With a sudden movement she raised a tiny pistol which she had been holding in her hand, half behind her, all this time, and held it to Tim's ear. The borderer looked in her face, and beheld in the beautiful eyes a stony, pitiless look that told him that she really would fire if he stirred a muscle, and yet he laughed.

"Bedad, me lady," he observed, quizzically, "ye've a mighty takin' way wid yez, but Tim Murphy's seen too many rifles to fear a popgun like that. Blaze away, me lady, and much good may it do yez."

Charlotte Lacy seemed to be too much surprised at his coolness to fire. She was not used to men with such thorough contempt for death. In a half hesitating manner she lowered the pistol, and the next moment it was seized in the iron grip of the borderer. What would have happened next is uncertain, for at that moment the crack of several rifles echoed without, and a bullet passed through Tim's cap, while three more crashed into the walls all round, proving the truth of Charlotte's words, that there were enemies outside.

"Run, man, run!" cried Everard. "You would have it, when I warned you to go. I can not protect you now."

Tim was indeed in deadly peril at that moment, but his coolness never forsook him.

"I'll pay ye for this, ye traitor!" he hissed, furiously, to Everard, and in a moment he was out of the window, and over the low gallery into the darkness without. Several shots were fired at him as he leaped down, but with such defective aim that he was unhurt. A number of figures came rushing at him, with shrill yells, and Tim realized that he was beset by *squaws*—squaws that could and did use rifles.

The borderer uttered a taunting laugh in reply, and fled across the rocky platform of the amphitheater, without returning a shot. It went against the Irishman's gallant nature to fire at women, although he knew them to be dangerous and implacable foes to those in their power. He trusted to the darkness and his own fleetness of foot to escape, and in a few moments more he was running swiftly up the glen, leaving his female pursuers far behind, followed by several random shots. It did not take Tim long to regain the source of the glen, climb out and return to his horse. It was in great bitterness of spirit that he mounted the noble animal and set out on his return journey, for he realized that the country was no longer safe for him.

"The traitor!" he said, savagely, to himself. "And I came all the way from Albany to get news of him, and he, the blackguard, a dirty traitor! bought with British gold! Ah, Misther Barbour! so I'd only had the time, I'd have stopped your tr'ason, ye thafe. Och! wirastru! The lad I was so fond of, gone over to the enemy! What'll poor Miss Marian say whin she hears of it? The cunning divil of a Spy Queen has witched him, sure, or he wouldn't have turned on his ould friend, Tim Murphy, like that. The cunning thafe! wid his paroles and fine stories about honor. Honor! A traitor! I'll give him honor when I see him again!"

Tim was terribly excited over his fruitless mission, and if Everard had been there that moment, his shrift would have been a short one from the indignant Irishman.

Tim was convinced that his favorite had gone over to the enemy, and nothing at that moment would have convinced him to the contrary, as he rode recklessly through the cornfield round She-bequin, despising the possibility of pursuit by the squaws in the village, and gloomily took the back track toward Albany.

Meanwhile, in the glen all was quiet once

more. The Indian girls who had composed Queen Esther's household, and trained by her into a sort of Amazon guard, had been the pursuers of Tim, but they soon got tired and returned to the house, with the news that the intruder had escaped, and the mysterious Spy Queen dismissed them to their posts at the back of the house, whence she had summoned them on hearing the noise of Tim's voice speaking to Everard.

The boy-officer looked downcast and gloomy, now it was all over, and his beautiful jailer remarked it.

"Everard," she said, softly, approaching him, "what ails you? Will you not tell poor sister Charlotte?"

And she twined her arm round his neck in the loving familiar fashion she had insensibly grown into, and looked into his eyes pleadingly.

"Charlotte," said he, gravely, "did you hear what Murphy called me?"

"No," she said, pretending not to understand him.

"He called me a traitor. Am I one, Charlotte? I have only kept my parole."

"Never mind," she said, evasively. "What is he but a rebel, anyway?"

"Ay, Charlotte. But I am a rebel, too, and I ought to have tried to escape long since. I ought not to have given my parole. I was weak and cowardly to do it. Please to have me confined now, that I may know that I can escape, if I have a chance. I give up my parole. I shall try to escape."

"From me?" she asked, pressing him closer.

"No; from myself," he answered. "I have been weak. If you do not have me confined, I shall escape to-night, and return to my duty."

"Very well," said Charlotte Lacy, calmly. "You can go. I return you your parole, Everard. You have kept it nobly. I will not be outdone in generosity. You are free to go."

"But you?" he stammered, in surprise; "how will you do this? I am the prisoner of the Indians."

"I take the responsibility," she answered. "You shall be sent on your way to-morrow morning. The Indians obey me, and I do what I please. Only one promise I exact in return for your freedom."

"Name it," said he. "If honor permits, I will give it."

"Whatever I do, and wherever you see me in future, Everard Barbour," said Charlotte Lacy, slowly, "I require you to keep secret all that has passed between us. You know me half, I will tell you all. I am the chief of the secret service of his majesty in these colonies, and you are the only American that knows it. I tried to corrupt you, brave, honest lad that you are, and I have failed. Everard, I never failed to make any man love me ere this, and now I—I—*you know why I have saved you*. On your faith as a soldier, on your honor as a gentleman, promise me that you will never reveal to mortal what I have told you, or anything that has passed between us, no matter who asks you."

"I promise," said Everard, solemnly, "on my faith as a soldier, on my honor as a gentleman, that I will never reveal to mortal who you are, nor what has passed between us."

"I ask no more," said Charlotte, sadly. "If ever you are in trouble, Everard, think of me as a sister."

"I do; I will," he said, warmly. His honor was still intact, but at that moment Charlotte seemed doubly beautiful, and Marian far off.

"Go then," she said, hastily waving him to the door. "While I am strong, say farewell. To-morrow all will be ready for you. Farewell."

He kissed her hand ardently, and left the room slowly, as if reluctant.

Charlotte looked after him, and a change came over her pale face.

"Yes," she murmured, triumphantly, "you shall go back, and I shall follow you, for, by this time, your Marian is safe with our good Montour. Ay, you shall go back, but I will be there, too. This virtuous attachment grows weaker daily. Patience, Charlotte. A little more, and this stubborn boy shall give honor, country and all to bask in thy smiles, and this blowsy country lass, this Marian Neilson, will make a good squaw to Black Eagle. Be it so. And what comes after all? Well, we shall see. He shall kneel to me first. I will not be balked of my will by a boy. He shall love me. Afterward, well, let the game go on. I can always throw up the hand if I tire of playing."

The enigmatical Spy Queen remained absorbed in thought for awhile, and then slowly withdrew to her chamber, the same that had been occupied by Queen Esther.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GRAPPLE OF DEATH.

THE carriage that contained Marian Neilson and the false countess traveled rapidly along the road, past the little hamlet of Quaker Springs, meeting not a soul till they came to the village, and passing rapidly through that. As they went Queen Esther kept the windows closed, and drew a small dagger, with which she

threatened Marian's life if the girl tried to scream for help. The precaution was needless, for Marian was thoroughly fascinated and cowed by the glittering eyes and powerful will of the old queen. They passed the village in safety, took the road to Cherry Valley, and camped in the woods at night, in precisely the same fashion in which the queen had been spied by Double-Death a few days before.

That night also they were joined by Black Eagle, with four warriors, all that had been left alive by the deadly aim of Tim Murphy. The chief looked gloomy and morose, and did not notice Marian much. He expressed his gratitude to Queen Esther for having recovered the White Flower, but seemed to be overcome with gloom at the destruction of so many of his warriors by Double-Death.

Marian was left alone in the carriage at night, a forbearance for which she was very grateful, and the journey was resumed next morning, their road lying through heavy woods, on an old Indian road, just wide enough to admit the carriage. At night they halted and camped in the woods as before, and so for three days no event occurred to disturb the gloomy monotony of the prisoner's life. On the fourth they encountered several parties of strange Indians, most of them with scalps at their belts, and Marian heard, with intense horror, that they were fresh from the massacre of Cherry Valley. Old Queen Esther seemed to be in her element as she questioned the various warriors about the slaughter, and heard that her own tribe and the Mohawks were in it. She insisted on leaving the clumsy carriage, assuming the warrior's dress, and departing with a party of her own tribe after more murders, leaving Marian in the charge of Black Eagle.

"Keep her yourself, chief," she said. "You swore that I lost her before. Keep her, and take care of her now. I got her for you."

It was with a sensation of great relief that Marian saw the wicked old woman take her departure. The very softness of her manners, and the evident marks of education possessed by Catherine Montour, only made the cruelty of her deeds the more repulsive to the poor girl. Left alone though she was with Black Eagle, without a woman anywhere near her, she could not help feeling easier.

The chief announced to her, in broken English, his intention of leaving the carriage behind, and offered to have a litter constructed for her use, better adapted to the woods.

Marian refused the offer and announced that she felt able to walk.

The chief looked pleased, and signified to her to follow him, and that she would be well treated. He left the vicinity of Cherry Valley, where the murders were at that moment going on, though Marian knew it not, and took a narrow path through the woods, where the party was compelled to walk in single file among the bushes. The chief led the party, with Marian next to him, and two warriors followed behind them. The other two ranged on either flank, a little in advance, in the cautious manner invariable with Indians on the march, and in this way they had walked fully fifteen miles through the woods. Toward evening the underwood ceased entirely, primeval forest taking its place, with a clear space between the trees for miles.

Marian was a robust girl, and in good health, but the day's walk had fatigued her considerably. She was by no means sorry, then, when the chief halted at sunset in a most lovely spot, a little natural opening in the wood, where a crystal spring lay framed in emerald. A fire was kindled; and the chief, with a consideration for her comfort she had not expected of him, set his followers to work to strip sheets of bark from the trees and construct a wigwam for her use.

"Let the White Flower sleep in peace to-night," he said, gravely, motioning her to enter. "Black Eagle has deaths to avenge before he enters lodge again. The terrible pale-face hunter has slain eight of my warriors single-handed, and Black Eagle has sworn never to sleep with his bride till he has hung the scalp of Double-Death at his belt."

Marian bowed her head, and her heart swelled with thankfulness. For a time, at least, she was safe from any importunities, and at the same time under the powerful protection of a chief, second to none on the war-path. She entered the little wigwam, and found that the interior was already comfortable. A heap of soft spruce twigs made a pleasant and sweet-smelling couch, at one side, over which was thrown the large bear-skin robe of Black Eagle himself, and a bountiful supper of fresh venison was brought into the lodge on a bark plate, by the hand of the chief himself.

Then the girl, wearied out with her day's travel, fell fast asleep almost as soon as it was dark, and dreamed that Queen Esther was dead, and that Everard was close beside her. How long she had slept she never knew, but she awoke in the dark, with the sound of rifle-shots in her ears, and crouched down again under the cover of the bear-skin, hearing the noise of a savage contest going on outside the wigwam, among the embers of the fire. There were blows and deep-toned curses following each

other for some minutes, all the sounds of a furious struggle going on, and still the wigwam was pitch dark. At last something or some one with a violent crash, came down against the side of the wigwam; the frail bark gave way, and two men, locked in the deadly grip of hate, came tumbling through the aperture, letting in a flood of moonlight on the scene, and falling at Marian's feet.

With a shriek of terror, the girl bounded up, and sprung through the opening, unheeded by the combatants, who continued to struggle vehemently, where they had fallen. Outside everything was still as death, and Marian, whose first impulse was to flee, she knew not where, ran into the woods and hid behind a tree, with the instinct of safety. There, she peeped back into the little glade, and a horrible sight met her view. Four dead bodies lay around the fire, in attitudes that conclusively showed they had been shot while asleep, and the girl recognized the fact that the struggling men in the tent could be no other than Black Eagle and the man who had slain his warriors. And who could this stranger be, who had been able to shoot these four men with such rapidity that not one had wakened in time?

The thought flashed over her mind at once: "It must be Double-Death."

She had heard, half-asleep, half-awake, only four shots, and they must have come from him, for no one else could have fired so quick. Involuntarily Marian forgot her apprehensions, and ventured closer, to see the termination of the grim struggle that was still going on within the shattered wigwam. As she came there, she spied on the ground the well-known double rifle of the hunter, then one pistol, then another, then a knife, then a tomahawk. It became evident that the chief had leaped up and grappled with the scout, who had lost all his weapons in the tussle that ensued.

Marian crept closer to the wigwam and looked in. The two men were still struggling, but the borderer was undermost. The chief, far the larger and more powerful of the two, had at last got his knee on Tim's chest, and was slowly strangling him to death, for he, too, seemed to have lost his weapons. It was a fearful moment for Marian. The chief had been kind to her, after his manner, and so had Tim Murphy. She saw that she could end the battle in the latter's favor, with the chief's tomahawk, which lay at her feet, and yet she hesitated a moment. Would it be right?

A look at the blackening face of the brave little scout decided her.

"I cannot let him die," she said, with a half-sob.

She seized the tomahawk, and struck at the head of Black Eagle, as he still strove hard to throttle the borderer. The erring weapon turned in her hand, and she only wounded him slightly, but the blow half-stunned the chief, and he let go his hold, and staggered to his feet.

Marian's courage was great *passively*, but in a contest like this, it required a fierce *aggressive* courage that she had not. Involuntarily she faltered and trembled, and ran back, dropping the tomahawk. Tim Murphy seemed to be too much exhausted to rise, and the chief went back and picked up the fallen tomahawk. He seemed to be confused and ferocious, for he strode toward Marian with ax uplifted, and the girl fell helplessly on her knees, murmuring: "Mercy! mercy!"

But Black Eagle was too much worked up to be capable of mercy at that moment. He half-staggered, half-strode forward, and seized the girl by the hair, when he wavered and shook all over. The tomahawk fell from his hand, and the great chief fell prone to the earth, where he lay still, a low moan issuing from his lips.

Marian was astounded, but the mystery was explained when she beheld a small, dark orifice in the naked back of the chief, close under the shoulder. It was the track of a bullet that had come out there, and he had not fallen till now. In a moment more, Murphy came crawling out of the wigwam, and the first move that the exhausted scout made, was to secure the weapons he had lost in the scuffle. Then he turned round, observing:

"Blessed be the Lord, this day, Miss Marian. I've found ye at last."

CHAPTER XX.

GENERAL ARNOLD.

THE commander of the Continental forces at Philadelphia was limping up and down his room, the old wound in his leg rendering his walk uneven and stiff. He held in his hand a letter, which he had been reading, whose contents appeared to have excited him, for an angry flush was on his brow, and he muttered, as he walked:

"The ungrateful hounds! After all I've done for them, to be treated thus! Not another man in the country would stand it, and they shall rue the day they drove me to the wall at last. Charges, indeed! Now, with their pestilent charges, I shall have no peace, I suppose, till a court of inquiry is ordered, to investigate my conduct, *mine*, who saved them from annihilation and gave them victory, at the time when

their Washington was being driven from pillar to post, from Brandywine to Germantown. Who would serve a republic? The vile mob that is swayed to and fro with every breath will give me no peace till I leave them. Who's there?"

A knock at the door interrupted his soliloquy.

"Come in," he said, and at the same time he thrust the letter into the bosom of his vest, and faced to the door, a dark, stern, but rather handsome man, near forty. The door opened, and a young officer made his appearance at the threshold, with his hand raised to his hat in the military salute.

"Come to report, sir," he said, simply.

The sight of him appeared to drive all the disagreeable thoughts from the mind of the commander, and to overwhelm him with astonishment.

"My God, Mr. Barbour!" he ejaculated; "they reported you dead! Where have you sprung from? Where have you been these months? Why, you left in August, and now it is December!"

"I have been a prisoner, general," said Everard. "I was taken at Wyoming, up in a tree, by a lot of savages, who besieged me there till I could not load fast enough for them; and they carried me off to the Genesee valley, and kept me a prisoner there till a few weeks ago, when I made my escape."

"But, what were you doing at Wyoming?" asked the general, sharply. "Why did you not return here when you had taken your news to the Commander-in-chief, sir?"

Everard hesitated.

"I had General Washington's orders, sir."

"And what did he detach one of *my* staff officers for?" asked the general, angrily. "Hasn't he enough of his own to send off?"

"I asked leave to go, sir," said Everard, quietly.

"Oh! you asked leave to go, did you?" said his commander, with a sneer. "And why, sir, may I ask? There are many gentlemen in the army who would gladly change places with you, to be stationed in a snug berth like this in Philadelphia."

"I know it, sir," said Everard, in a low tone; "but—but—"

"But what, sir?" asked the general. "Come, out with it. Do you want to be on active service? Time was, sir, when to be with *me* was a guarantee of active service. But one duty is just as important as another, and the duty of this post must be done, Mr. Barbour. You'll find the papers of your office very much behind-hand, sir; I have had to detail a sergeant to do the work. Since you've returned from your gadabout expedition to the front, perhaps you'll oblige me by sending him to his duties."

Everard stood still, mortified to death. He had been wont to be a great favorite with his general since the battle of Bemis's Heights; and had repaid the latter by perfectly adoring him. He had expected a welcome as one from the dead, and had been met by sneers and sarcasms.

He turned slowly away to the door, the tears standing in his eyes.

"I will do it, general," he said, in a low voice.

The commander stopped suddenly, and looked at the boy aid-de-camp more kindly as he went out.

"Everard," he said.

Instantly the lad was back, his face beaming with joy and eagerness.

"General!" he said; but in the one word was a tumult of contending feelings, too big for utterance.

The general held out his hand kindly.

"Don't mind my temper, lad," he said. "My wound troubles me a good deal, and makes me peevish. You ought, indeed, to be at the front, where there are opportunities of active service and promotion. There's nothing here but vanity and vexation of spirit. A lot of these sneaking townsmen have been getting up a complaint against me to the Commander-in-chief, simply because I do my duty here and issue necessary but disagreeable orders. I swear to you, Everard, it's no very pleasant matter to command in this place, when all the disagreeables are placed on one man's shoulders. I'm tired of it, and I shall apply for active service to-morrow."

Everard's eyes sparkled, as he said:

"Thank God, general, I can be with you still."

Another tap at the door. An orderly entered with a note.

"Miss Lacy's servant waits an answer, general."

The general flushed deeply, and tore it open.

Everard's heart gave a jump. Charlotte Lacy was back, and in correspondence with his general! What could it mean?

CHAPTER XXI.

TORY PLOTS.

WHEN Everard's commander had finished reading the little pink note, perfumed and delicate, which the orderly had handed him, his whole manner changed, and he became quite good-humored, to all appearance.

"Tell the man I will come," he said to the orderly. The dragoon saluted stiffly, wheeled round, and clattered down the corridor.

Then the general turned to Everard, smilingly.

"Mr. Barbour," he said, "I want you to go with me this evening to a lady's house, a very dear friend of mine. Will you come? You seem to have found friends who have provided you with funds, so that you need not be ashamed of your appearance. I'm glad of it, sir. Be ready at four o'clock. You'll go in my carriage."

"Very good, general," said the young officer; and he turned away, and went to his room—the same he had occupied when before in Philadelphia. He found it unchanged, and the outer room or office looked as neat as when he had left it; while a dragoon sergeant was sitting at the table, writing busily, and Everard's servant was bustling about, setting out his master's garments.

"How are you, sergeant? I'm glad to see you."

"Welcome back, lieutenant. We heard you were killed."

The salutation was cordial, for Everard was a great favorite with the troops, on account of his kindness. It is surprising how easy it is to acquire the love of soldiers, and how far a kind word goes with them.

"Well, sergeant, and what news has there been, since I've been away?" asked Everard, after looking over reports, etc., for some minutes.

"Nothing except the general's marriage, sir," answered the sergeant. "That's settled for the end of this month, we understand, and they're making great preparations at Judge Shippen's for the festival."

"Indeed?" said Everard. "And does the general call there every day still?"

"Every day, sir, when he is not at the Lacy House."

"And he is often there?" asked Everard, carelessly.

"They say that Miss Shippen is a great friend of the lady there," said the sergeant, and he looked a little awkward, as if he had been talking about something he had no business with.

Putting everything together, Everard began to suspect that all was not quite pleasant in his general's household, but his military etiquette forbade his inquiring any further of a non-commissioned officer as to the doings of his general.

He began to dress for the visits he expected to make, the same mysterious hand having been near him, which he began to recognize as that of the Spy Queen—the same hand that had smoothed his path throughout the Indian country, sending him by hidden ways to Philadelphia, as if he had made his escape without collusion. And now Charlotte Lacy was back in Philadelphia, and he knew her to be engaged in machinations of the most dangerous kind against his country; and yet he dared not, could not, speak. The same honor that held him faithful to his parole in Sheshequin must seal his lips as to her actions, no matter what they were, for he had promised her that.

He stood at the window, thoughtfully gazing down the stately avenue of elms, when a splendid carriage, drawn by four black horses, drove up to the door and halted in the shade of the trees.

"Whose carriage is that, sergeant?" he asked.

"The general's, sir."

Everard started. The general's carriage! And he knew him to be poor, comparatively speaking. How could he keep such an expensive equipage, far richer than that of the Commander-in-chief?

He had no time to think much, however, for he heard the halting gait of his superior on the stairs, and hastened out to help him down. They entered the carriage, and were driven rapidly into Arch street, and thence up toward the very house in which Everard had first seen Charlotte Lacy. As they went along, the boy noticed that many black looks came from the people on the sidewalks, directed toward them, and in one place Everard heard a faint hiss. The general heard it too, and a furious flush crossed his stern face, as he turned his eyes, glaring savagely, on the man who had given utterance to it.

"The low-bred cur!" he ground out from between his teeth, with fierce emphasis. "Who would serve a republic, Everard?"

The lad felt as angry as his commander, for he sympathized with him devotedly.

"Never mind the fellow, general," he said, soothingly. "You can afford to despise fellows like him. The good men of this country love and respect you."

The general frowned impatiently.

"The good men? Where are they? Not in Congress, where they denied me my just rank, till I forced it from them by deeds even my enemies could not deny. Bah! Let it go, Everard. I'll try to forget these crawling reptiles. Here we are at our destination."

Everard looked up. He was before the Lacy House. He would be obliged to enter it as a stranger, and disclaim all past knowledge of its owner. But would his father be there?—and if so, how should he treat him?

Before he had solved the difficulty, the servant had knocked at the door, and Everard found himself helping his commander up the steps of the same house where he had first been so sorely tempted from his duty to Marian by the blue eyes of Charlotte Lacy. The door was opened as he was still troubling his head about his course, and the servant ushered them in, bowing low before the stately figure of the general.

While the door was still open, Everard heard a derisive yell from the street behind him, and the sound of a loud, coarse voice shouting:

"Curse all Tories!"

He cast a quick glance behind him, and caught sight of a peddler, with his pack on his back, standing on the sidewalk, pointing jeeringly at him. The next moment the footman slammed the door vindictively; and the general, pretending not to notice any thing, stumped upstairs, and preceded Everard into the magnificent saloon, where he had first met Charlotte. It looked just the same as ever, but instead of Miss Lacy alone, there was quite a bevy of beautiful young ladies, all of whom advanced to greet the general as if he were an old friend.

Everard waited modestly to be introduced. He had not seen Charlotte since he left her in the Glen of the Sheshequin, but she had reached Philadelphia before him. He was curious to see how she would behave.

In a few moments the general presented him, with much kindness, saying:

"Young ladies, this is my favorite aid-de-camp, Mr. Barbour, my gallant young friend. He has just returned from the tender mercies of your red friends who burnt Wyoming, having escaped from them unhurt, as you see; how, I never inquired. Miss Lacy, will you not take him into your friendship for my sake?"

"For your sake I would do much," replied the sweet voice of Miss Lacy. "I think, however, we can welcome a gay young gentleman like him, for his own. Mr. Barbour, my dear friend Miss Maggie Shippen, whom you have doubtless heard of at head-quarters."

Everard bowed low before a dark, stately young beauty, whom he knew as the promised bride of his general. Charlotte Lacy's manner was perfectly unconscious, as if she had never seen him before, but exceedingly cordial. He was presented in turn to the other young ladies, whose names he recognized as belonging to well-known Tory families in all cases. The conversation at once became general and political.

Everard found himself in the midst of a violent Tory faction, and heard the patriots and their commander held up to unsparing ridicule by all, while his general made but feeble efforts to defend them, contenting himself with laughing at the sallies of wit.

The young officer felt uncomfortable and unhappy. He tried to speak, and was met by so many adversaries that he was driven to silence. It was Charlotte Lacy herself who came to his rescue, saying:

"Girls, girls, you forget that Mr. Barbour is not used to our jokes, like the general, who pretends to side with us, only to draw us out. You'll find yourselves all arrested some fine morning, by this same general, and you may want an intercessor. Positively I'm going to carry off Mr. Barbour, he looks so uncomfortable, and you can all talk treason together then. Come, Mr. Barbour, let us take a walk to the greenhouse, and leave them."

The response was a shower of railery from her friends, for "turning rebel lover," but she only laughed in answer, and carried off Everard in triumph.

"Everard," she said, in a low tone, when they were in the conservatory and out of hearing of the gay group in the parlor, "you should not have come here."

"I could not help it," he said. "The general ordered me. Oh, Miss Lacy, what does it mean, these ladies talking treason in this manner? I can understand his listening to it, for he doubtless wishes to draw out intelligence from your side, to help our cause; but they will surely repent their temerity some day."

"Perhaps," she said, with an enigmatic smile. "You think that your general is the soul of honor, Everard?"

"Of course," he answered. "Have not I seen him in the field? I should not be with him if I believed he consented to this treason in earnest."

"You are right," she said; "you should not. Everard, you have kept faith with me, and I have tried you sorely. I will not seek to draw you into dishonor. Return to your quarters now. I will make your excuses. You must not be drawn into the atmosphere that surrounds him. I will not allow it."

"Miss Lacy," said Everard, imploringly, "you are so beautiful and powerful that you can do any thing. I know that you must be trying to draw the general into treason. Promise me that you will leave him alone, if you have any regard for me. He has many enemies here. He can not afford to have his name mixed up in Tory plots."

She smiled faintly in answer.

"You are wrong, Everard. I have not sought to entrap him. He—but never mind, you ought

not to be here, dear. We must find a way to send you away before long. Leave it to me. Go now, and when you hear me spoken ill of, Everard, remember that I left you free when you asked me, and saved you when you were in my power. Farewell."

She motioned him away when she finished, and the young officer left the house by the back gate of the garden, in obedience to her gesture directing him there.

When he came out in Race street, in which it opened, he saw the same peddler who had been so offensive at the front door, sitting under the shelter of a fence, sunning himself. The street was almost a country lane in those days, and there was no one else in sight.

To his surprise the peddler rose and came toward him as he started for his quarters, following him with clamorous petitions to buy.

"You get no custom from me," said Everard, indignantly. "Did you not insult my commander and myself not twenty minutes ago? Begone, sirrah, if you don't want a taste of this cane!"

"Who cares for your cane, anyhow?" said the peddler, squaring himself defiantly in front of Everard. "You're nothing but a Tory, anyway, for all your fine uniform. Don't I know who lives in that house? You and your general ought to be turned out, for associating with a pack of Tory jades, like Mag Shippen and Lot Lacy."

With an angry exclamation, Everard rushed at the insolent one, his cane uplifted. It fell from his grasp, unused, as he heard the voice of his own father from the disguise, saying:

"That'll do, Everard. We've played this farce long enough. We're both in the same boat now."

CHAPTER XXII.

SPIES IN CAMP.

"WHAT do you mean," asked Everard, the next moment, "by being in the same boat, sir? I am no Tory."

"Bah! tell that to the marines," said his father, scornfully. "No more am I, for that matter. Don't I cry 'Down with all Tories!' as well as the best patriot of them all? It suits my purpose better, sir; and so do you, as you are. I tell you what, Everard, you might make a pile of money, if you only knew how to do it. And I can show you the way, sir. It's only to find out a few things about your general, and I'll promise you good pay for it, better than you'll get as a beggarly continental."

"Be kind enough to cease, sir," said Everard, coldly. "I have no desire to turn spy. It is enough to have you in that capacity. Let me pass home."

"Spy, sir! How dare you call me any such name? Can not a man belong to the secret service of his majesty, without being called a spy? You were not too proud to accept the spy's money, at all events. I see your appearance is improved, since you found such a pleasant home in the Glen of Madame Montour, with the Spy Queen."

Everard started. How could his father have known this?

"Ay," said John Barbour; "you forget who I am, boy. Not a step do you take, but is recorded, and there's enough evidence now to cashier you, if it were brought to Washington's ears. You'll soon have the name of traitor, and you may as well get the pay of it."

"Sir," said Everard, pale with anger, "let me pass, or I shall forget what is due to you, and use force."

"What a fool you are," said Barbour, with a sneer, unheeding his words, "to let the prize escape from your very grasp! Why, boy, you might have married Miss Lacy and been a rich man ere this, if you had chosen. The very servants could see that she was infatuated with you. And you must needs be engaged to that low-bred baggage, Moll Neilson. Bah! you're a fool, and deserve what you'll get."

Here Everard, beside himself with vexation, brushed past his father, and started for his quarters. All in vain. The indefatigable old man stuck to him and followed him, talking all the way.

"Yes. Deserve what you'll soon get. Do you think Madame Montour is the woman to let her adopted daughter be carried away without getting her again? She's been captured and brought back, fool. Ay, and she has found consolation for your loss in the lodge of Black Eagle. These girls are romantic, and Black Eagle's a handsome fellow. Moll Neilson might do worse than become a chief's wife—hey, sir?"

Everard involuntarily stopped when he heard these words. They touched him in a tender spot. He turned round and faced his father.

"What do you mean, sir?" he said. "Do you think to fool me with a tale like that, when I know Marian is home at her father's by this time?"

John Barbour laughed.

"Ah! then you did not know why Queen Esther left the village, did you? Your friend Murphy wasn't sharp enough to find it out, neither. Oh! I know all about it, Everard. You may as well stop trying to fool your father, sir. I tell you she is married to Black Eagle. The fool

demand the services of a priest, and Queen Esther sent for one from Niagara, on purpose to satisfy her. You don't believe it. You'll find it true, full soon."

And John Barbour turned away, having said all he wished to. But this time it was Everard who followed him. He was pale with excitement.

"Sir," he said, half-gasping in his eagerness, "prove what you have said, and I'll believe you, but not without. No, sir, not without."

"Oh! it needs no proof," said his father, carelessly. "You'll find it true, when you go home, thinking to claim a blushing bride. I can't waste time on a fellow like you, who let's a queen fish slip to hook a minnow, and loses the very minnow. Good-day, sir."

And John Barbour stalked off, forgetting for the nonce his assumed character of the peddler. Everard stood hesitating a moment, and then turned and made his way to his quarters, with drooping head. Was this true, could it be true? His father evidently belonged to the spy corps which controlled the tribes of the Genesee valley, and of the power of the female chief of that corps he had seen the proofs. John Barbour knew all about his connection with her, and might not this news he brought be true also? Everard had been brought up to think his father an honorable man, at all events till the war had broken out.

In a state of mind full of gloom and despondency, he walked slowly back to head-quarters, went up to his room, and locked himself in. Had all his faith and honor, clinging to his engagement when so sorely tempted by the beautiful siren, been repaid by this news? Marian married, and to an Indian! Had she been dead, he could have borne it, and mourned for her as one worthy; but the fact of a marriage under a priest signified consent on her part, and the shuddering repugnance with which an alliance with an Indian was looked on by the patriots, since the atrocities of Wyoming, could hardly be overestimated.

"False, perjured wretch!" groaned Everard. "But, no, it can not be true! I will apply for leave at once. I will write to General Washington. No, no, no, what is it to him? I can not do any thing!"

He remained in his room, buried in miserable, anxious thought, for near an hour, when he heard the general's carriage draw up outside, and the steps of the commander on the stairs.

"I will go to him," said the unhappy boy, to himself. "I will tell him the story, and beg him for leave of absence. I can go to Albany and back in three weeks at most, if I travel post."

He waited until he heard his general enter his room, when he repaired thither to find the latter changing his uniform for a handsome civilian's dress, for a dinner party at Judge Shippen's.

"Aha! Everard," said the chief, laughing; "so these little Tories at the Lacy House frightened you away, did they? You'll get used to that sort of thing, my lad, and learn to laugh at it, as I do. It's not half so bad as the pestilent Whiggery of those hounds that hiss me in the streets for doing a disagreeable duty. But what's the matter, Barbour?"

He noticed the pale and excited manner of his aide-de-camp for the first time, as he came nearer the lamp, for it was now dark.

"General," said Everard, in a constrained tone, "you have been very kind to me, and I am going to ask you a favor. I want leave of absence for four weeks, to visit my family on private business."

The general wheeled round and stared at him.

"Are you mad, boy? What's the matter?"

"General, I'll tell you," said poor Everard.

"You were quartered at Mr. Neilson's house, near Stillwater, and therefore you know her."

And then out came the story of having heard the news of Marian's marriage, and of all the boy's misery. The general asked no questions about whence the information came. He listened attentively and not unkindly to the story, and at the conclusion said, gravely:

"Lad, it is true. You need not go to see."

"But how do you know, general?" asked Everard, doubting.

"I have it from the best authority," said the general, slowly, "a spy of ours, who has just returned from the Indian country, and seen the bridal feast. You need not doubt it, for I know it. You can not have the leave, Mr. Barbour, because it would be useless, and would prejudice the public service. I'm sorry for you, lad, but remember, there are plenty of other women left. Here, I'm going out this evening, come with me."

"Pardon me, general," said Everard, sadly; "unless you order it, I do not wish to go. I have received a blow, and need occupation and work to direct my mind to-night, that's all."

"Very good," said the general, kindly. "Take these papers into your room, then, and copy them. That will give you something to do. Here they are. Two reports of the garrison and district, and this letter to General Washington. Have them ready by eleven o'clock."

Everard took the papers, bowed low and re-

tired. For the first time in their acquaintance he doubted his commander's word. How was it that so many men knew of this terrible thing already, when he had only just heard of it? One thing was plain, however, that he could not hope to get his leave of absence, and could only write to the Neilsons, and wait a reply in the course of weeks.

He slowly went to his room, sat down, wrote a letter, and dispatched it by an orderly to the post-office. Then he took hold of his reports, and set resolutely to work to copy them out fairly.

For some time he hardly understood what he was doing, writing on mechanically, reports of independent companies and batteries, long catalogues of different kinds of accouterments on hand, and so forth.

At last, however, he had finished the first report, and took up the second. To his surprise, he found it to be a long and tabulated return of the whole Continental forces, with all the places where each regiment was stationed, and the effective force of each.

"What business has the military governor of Philadelphia with this?" said Everard, to himself. "This is no use to send to Washington. It must be a mistake."

He examined it carefully over again, and found it as he had said. He turned to the letter that was to accompany it, and found that he had only one of the reports that should have been copied. The second was an account of expenditures in the post command, and was not to be found.

"I'll go and look for it," thought Everard.

The novelty of the work had taken off his attention from his own troubles somewhat, and he rose up and was going to carry back the wrong report, when his eye was caught by something written in red ink on the back, as he folded it up.

A close inspection revealed the words:

"To be forwarded to Sir H. C. by schooner *Regina*."

The handwriting was that of his general.

Everard started, and a cold sweat broke out on his forehead. *Sir H. C.* could be none other than Sir Henry Clinton, the British Governor of New York, and his general was in correspondence with the enemy!

To say that Everard was astounded is not too much. The rumors and hints he had heard before had passed uncredited, but this sudden proof, right under his own eyes, utterly overwhelmed him.

"Where is faith left now," he half groaned to himself, "when Marian is false, and my general corresponds with the enemy?"

And then the thought came over him, was his general really a traitor, or was he only in correspondence with some of his own spies, to find out what he could about the British? Was not this elaborate report possibly an erroneous one, on purpose to mislead Clinton?

Doubting and fearing, Everard yet had coolness enough to determine on knowing more, and remembered that he had yet an hour and a half in which to work before the general came in.

Without any more delay he took a candle and passed into the commander's room, unnoticed by anybody. The regulations of the household were exceedingly lax, and when the master was absent, the servants were not to be found anywhere on duty. He could hear them laughing away in the kitchen, and so was quite free to work.

He entered the room, a large, old-fashioned apartment, like all in that house, with a cheerful wood-fire burning in the broad, low fireplace. In the middle of the room was a large table, strewn with papers and books, a mass of letters, a foot high, lying in one place. It was one of his general's characteristics to leave every thing on that table, and nobody dared disturb its arrangement.

Everard set down his candlestick, and hastily examined the papers that lay on the table. There was a heap of complimentary letters from different ladies, reports and letters from subordinates, and what surprised him most, a number of bills, portentous in amount, many of them, not one of which seemed to have been paid. So far, however, there was nothing treasonable, and Everard began to feel ashamed of himself for prying into his general's private affairs, when a letter, in a large and rather pointed hand, attracted his attention.

It was signed JOHN ANDERSON.

The letter seemed to be from a mercantile man, proposing that certain business transactions should be carried through, by which a great quantity of money might be made for himself and his friend.

Everard did not know what to make of this. Apparently it was quite innocent on its face, but there was a certain undercurrent of meaning that he could not quite understand.

He stood with the letter in his hand, reflecting, when he heard the street door opened and softly shut, while some one was ascending the stairs. Hastily concealing the report in his bosom, he turned and left the room, only to be encountered on the top step of the stairs by his general himself!

For one minute Everard faltered. Then he boldly faced his superior.

The general looked at him fixedly for several minutes.

"So, sir," he said, at last, "you have finished your work?"

His tone was that of cold inquiry, but his eyes glared like tiger's eyes.

"Not quite, general," said Everard.

"Then why are you here, sir?" demanded his chief, sternly.

"You gave me a wrong report, general," said Everard. "I discovered the error, and came to look for the right one."

"So?" said the general, and there was a world of sarcastic meaning in the single word.

"Yes, sir, and I think you will own," said Everard, "that a tabulated report of the Continental armies, addressed to Sir Henry Clinton, by schooner *Regina*, was not the report you meant me to copy."

The general turned deadly pale all over his dark face, out of which his black eyes glared with fearful intensity.

He held out his hand.

"Give me the report, sir," he hissed, rather than said. "Where do you find any such words?"

CHAPTER XXIII.

BREAKING ARREST.

EVERARD hesitated. He did not like to delay compliance, and yet he might be parting with the only proof in his power that he was justified in prying into his general's affairs.

The dark general noticed his hesitation.

"Well, sir," he said, imperiously, "do you mean to obey orders, or would you like to look through my papers a little more? Give me the report."

Everard held out his hand involuntarily, with the letter he had just been reading, and which he had unconsciously retained possession of all the time. It produced a sudden effect on the general.

He turned paler, if possible, than before, and clutched savagely at the letter, which he shook menacingly in Everard's face, too furious, at the moment, for speech.

"How dare you?" he hissed out, at last; "how dare you pry among my papers, sir? What have you been doing in here? What business had you in here? Where's that report you spoke of, sir?"

Everard slowly drew it out and his commander snatched it from him, glanced at it hastily, and broke out into a sneering laugh.

"So, my young spy! you would join my enemies to defame me, on evidence like this. Why, fool that you are, this is a false report, sent me by Washington himself for Sir Henry Clinton, on purpose to deceive him. If you had detained that, you might have prevented a glorious victory for us. Let this be a lesson to you, boy, to keep your fingers out of my business, or they may get burnt. Go to your quarters, under arrest."

He ended in the harsh, quick tones of the superior officer greatly angered.

Everard bowed and turned away, sick at heart, wretched, uncertain whether he was right or wrong, certain of one thing, however, that his military career was likely to be blasted prematurely, in the heat of his general's anger. And he had nothing now on which to found his suspicions; on the contrary, there was every thing to prove that he had wronged his commander, and if so, he deserved to be cashiered for conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.

He reached his room and sat down in gloomy silence, pondering over the successive blows he had received that day. What could he do to undo the mischief now afoot?

The answer seemed simple and irresistible.

He sat there buried in thought till he heard the town clock strike twelve. At the last stroke an orderly entered the room with a folded paper, which he delivered to Everard, and then stalked out.

The lad opened it, and found a document in the handwriting of his general, with the ominous heading:

"CHARGES AND SPECIFICATIONS."

Then he felt a thrill of dread. The general must be in bitter earnest, and determined to destroy him.

The charges were short—two in number.

No. 1 covered that broad and convenient ground. "Conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman," and specified the finding of Everard engaged in opening letters addressed to his commanding officer. It was enough to send him out of the service with disgrace, if supported.

No. 2 was still worse.

It was nothing less than *desertion to the enemy*, and the witness was said to be *Timothy Murphy of Morgan's Rangers*; the time and place being specified, in which the bold scout had taken his abrupt leave of Everard.

The lad started up in his seat in astonishment. How in Heaven's name was this possible? Had Murphy got back already, and had he really given such a color to his refusal to escape when on parole?

He strode rapidly up and down the room, cursing the restraint of etiquette that placed

him there, as if in a prison, from which he could not escape, except by breaking arrest.

At last, as he had almost resolved to do something desperate, a tap came at the door, and a man entered, in whom he started to recognize his own father. John Barbour was plainly dressed in a dark riding-dress, with high boots, and wore a large cloak hanging from his shoulders. He came up close to his son, and whispered:

"I know all about it, Everard. Damme, sir, I'm your father after all, and I can't see you mixed up with that villain any longer. You must escape, sir."

"I can not," returned Everard. "I am under arrest; and if I break it, 'twill be like breaking parole, not to be pardoned."

"Boy," said John Barbour, "do you think I don't know this general of yours by heart, when I have corresponded with him, and negotiated his business for six months? He has resolved to crush you to save himself, and he found an Irish fellow, whose evidence will cashier you, if it doesn't shoot you, beyond a doubt. If you stay, you are ruined. Come with me, and you're safe."

"But oh! father, where can I go now?" groaned Everard, quite unnerved.

"To the Commander-in-chief," said Barbour. "He will give you justice on the truth of your case. Come with me, and we will be there in three days."

Everard hesitated no more. Without consideration he left the room with his father, and the arrest was broken.

In a few minutes they were in the street, Everard carrying his valise in his hand, hurrying down to the river.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE STORM.

A COLD, driving storm of snow and sleet beat in the faces of the two travelers, as they hurried on through the darkness, John Barbour leading the way. Everard's heart was full of bitterness, and the unfriendly aspect of the heavens increased his gloom. That morning his prospects had looked so bright, and now they seemed irrecoverably blasted. By a single act of imprudence he had drawn upon himself the anger of a man who was said never to forgive, and now he was committing a second act, not only imprudent, but in the stern view of military law, unpardonable. He was "breaking his arrest."

And for what purpose?

He could hardly tell himself, except that his father had suddenly appeared as if dropped from the clouds, and persuaded him to go somewhere with him, on the idea of going to the Commander-in-chief. And if he got there, what was he to say to this stern and unbending general, just and kind though he was reputed to be? How could he excuse his conduct, save by a vague accusation of treason against his general, which he had nothing to support but his bare word?

As these thoughts crossed his mind, he was tempted to turn back, and throw himself on the mercy of his general. He felt convinced that he had wronged him, and the remembrance of his commander's former kindness began to make itself felt.

He actually stopped in the street—they were just out of Pine street into Delaware street, that ran along the river—and would have turned back, but his father caught him by the arm as if anticipating his intention.

"We are almost there, lad," he said, hurriedly. "Yonder is the schooner in which we sail, and in an hour more we shall be safe at sea. Come."

"Oh! sir, let me go back," said Everard, quite broken down for the moment. "I can not desert. This is nothing but desertion."

"Boy," said John Barbour, earnestly, "when you were a child you trusted me, and I did every thing for your good. Have I become hateful to you now? I tell you that behind you lies disgrace, before you lie fame, riches and honor, if you will trust me. Come. It is too late to recede, for you have already broken your arrest."

The last words decided Everard.

With a resigned shrug of the shoulders he followed his father, and the next minute the full force of the north-east storm struck them, as they went out of the shelter of the corner across Delaware street, toward the dock. The tall, naked masts of a schooner rose up through the gloom, relieved against the faint yellowish glow of the stormy sky, and toward this schooner John Barbour proceeded. A light was burning in the binnacle, and several dark, muffled-up figures were moving about the deck.

The old Tory stepped aboard, and he seemed to be expected, for no one made any remark as he proceeded to the cabin, and motioned Everard to follow him. The young officer did so, and found himself in the small cabin of an ordinary trading-vessel, a little more elegant perhaps than most, but only provided with a single table, and benches secured to the floor, besides the two rows of berths.

"Stay here, Everard," whispered John Barbour, as if apprehensive of being heard. "By

everything is ready, but we may have trouble in getting out. I must go on deck, to see to things."

Everard gloomily nodded, and threw off the hat and cloak in which he had been muffled, setting down his valise on the table. He remained sitting, with his head buried in his hands, forgetful of his surroundings, till he heard a great clattering and stamping overhead. After a while this was still, and then again came the noise of feet rushing about, and the creaking of ropes and blocks. In a very few minutes, too, the vessel began to heave and roll as if it was putting out to sea, and Everard rose and went up the companionway to look out.

He saw the crew, consisting of some dozen men, gathered at the bow of the vessel, hauling at a rope which seemed to be stretched some distance out into the river. The cold wind and cutting sleet were exceedingly bitter, and Everard shivered and drew back under the shelter of the hatchway, to watch with more comfort.

The vessel slowly forged ahead away from the wharf, the wind blowing diagonally toward the mouth of the river, till she had attained a position nearly a hundred fathoms from the head of the dock, when she seemed to be short over her anchor. Then the men scattered and ran aft, and Everard saw the mainsail slowly rising in the air under their strength. In a few minutes it was set, and the boat swung round, head to the biting tempest, when again the crew rushed forward and hauled at the cable. Everard, in his ignorance of nautical affairs, understood nothing, till a heavy jerk that seemed to shake the little vessel from stem to stern, announced that the anchor had left its bed in the Delaware mud, and the men flew at the foot of the foremast like tigers, while the vessel went surging down the river. In a moment more, with a terrible roaring and flapping, the jib rose slowly in the air; the wind caught it, and swelled it out like a balloon; the vessel spun round on her heel, and went shooting down the river before the full force of the heavy gale and powerful current, like a race-horse in his first half-mile.

The air in the little hatchway where Everard stood became calm, and quiet, now that the vessel was fairly under way; the men were all busy in different places, belaying ropes and making every thing snug, and Everard beheld his father, elephantine in aspect, muffled in a huge pea-jacket, with great sea-boots on, coming toward the cabin once more.

"Keep her steady, Jim," said the old man. "We shall open the fort lights in a very few minutes now. Ha! there they are, and there's the guard-boat. If they stop us to-night, they'll have good shots aboard."

And John Barbour laughed defiantly.

Everard noticed that even in the dark his father appeared to better advantage than he had. There was an air of jollity and careless courage in his broad red face, very different from the ill-temper that had marked it while he was playing the spy ashore. He seemed to be more in his element on the deck of the schooner than he had been when in disguise in Philadelphia.

Everard retired into the cabin, where he hastily muffled himself in his cloak and fastened his hat securely to his head. He had resolved to go on deck and see how they were going to get through. Moreover, the close, stifling air of the cabin made him feel sick, together with the motion of the vessel, and he wanted to be outside.

When he got on deck it was blowing harder than ever, and the sleet, freezing as it fell, had covered the decks as with a sheet of glass. Ahead of them, on either side of the river, were two lights, which seemed to be approaching with great rapidity, as the banks of the river drove by.

A third light, out in the river itself, was tossing up and down violently, indicating what a heavy sea was running.

Everard went aft to the binnacle, and found his father standing by the helmsman. John Barbour was evidently in command of the schooner, though his son wondered where he had got his nautical knowledge.

"Steady, Jim," was the warning command. "Keep her full, lad. Now we'll soon see what the guard-boat fellows are made of."

As he spoke, the schooner went sweeping down through the gloom toward the tossing light, which speedily revealed itself in the shape of a long, low row-boat, crowded with men, pulling across their forefoot.

A hoarse hail came across the water as they approached.

"Schooner, ahoy! Heave to, or we'll fire into you!"

"Fire away!" shouted John Barbour, at the top of his voice, and down swept the schooner straight at the boat. Everard saw his father seize the helm with his own hands, and the schooner's bow gave a wide sheer as she bore down so as to aim at the boat amidships.

The commander of the boat appeared to be very much excited about them, and shouted out some orders to his crew. Instantly there was a loud crash of oars, as the rowers bent to them, with frantic efforts to escape the doom of being run down. There was a broad, bright flash,

the roar of a gun, and a round shot went humming over the heads of the men in the schooner, harmlessly enough. The next moment the bows of the vessel struck the boat on the quarter, and passed over her as if she had been only a canoe, leaving a crowd of dark figures in the water.

Everard was horror-stricken. They were his own comrades, soldiers of the Continental army, that were being thus slaughtered. But he could do nothing to help them. Almost before he had fully realized what was being done, the schooner had left the poor, freezing, drowning wretches in the river far behind, and was careering away between the two lights on the banks out toward the open sea.

John Barbour kept the helm, and seemed to be well acquainted with the passage, for he steered boldly on.

Flash! Boom!

A gun from near the light, on the right bank of the river, gave token that the people of the fort had realized that something was wrong. In spite of the darkness, the shot passed close astern, proving that the artillerymen had the range perfectly, and could see the white sails.

Flash! Boom!

A second gun followed, from the opposite side of the river.

The shot crossed their bows, and went skipping over the water for a long distance.

It was too dark for good practice. The schooner kept on faster than ever, and before another gun could be fired, had put one of the lights out of sight behind a projecting point of the bank.

The next gun was wilder than the first, and satisfied Everard that they were out of danger. The excitement had kept the feeling of sickness off him so far, but as the schooner got more and more outside, and left the lee of the land, the swell became heavier every moment, and the motion of the vessel altogether too much for one wholly unused to it. Everard was obliged to go below, where for a time he forgot every thing else in the martyrdom of sea-sickness.

John Barbour did not come down-stairs till the first streaks of dawn lighted up the east, and then he looked sanguine and cheerful.

"Everard, my boy," he said to his son, "thank Heaven we are out of the clutches of the cursed rebels at last. In twenty-four hours more we'll be off the Jersey coast, and safe in New York harbor, under the guns of his blessed majesty's cruisers. Hurrah for King George and down with all Yankees!"

In spite of his miserable state, Everard started up, dismayed.

"In New York, sir?" he faltered. "You told me we were going to see the Commander-in-chief, whose head-quarters are at Morristown."

"All's fair in war," returned John Barbour, indifferently. "You may as well know it all, first as last. Your general owns an interest in this vessel, and has been trading with New York ever so long. I have been his agent. We cooked up this plot together ourselves, and the best thing you can do is to join the king's forces. You cannot escape the consequences of what has been woven round you for the last six months. Come, boy, I'm your father. I brought you up in truth and honor. Do you think I would counsel you to do wrong? No. Abandon the sinking cause of these insolent rebels, and join the armies of your king as an officer and a gentleman. I have worked and toiled for this end for months, Everard, when you thought me cold. Why should you cling to these people? The very girl whose influence engaged you with them has been false to you, and she who is worth a hundred such, a lady of wealth and refinement, stands ready to marry you tomorrow. You cannot hesitate, boy. Nay, you'll join us."

Everard trembled all over.

"Leave me, sir," he said, in a low tone. "You have woven the web of deceit too well. I may be disgraced without meriting it, but I will never consent to it willingly. Consider me a prisoner."

"You're excited, boy," said John Barbour, soothingly. "You shall have due time to consider, and remember that *Miss Lacy will be in New York when we get there.*"

And John Barbour returned on deck, leaving Everard in a maze of doubt and despair.

CHAPTER XXV.

RUNNING THE BLOCKADE.

In spite of John Barbour's prediction as to time, it was fully five days before the schooner approached the harbor of New York. Although her course down the Delaware river had been excessively rapid, owing to the favoring gale, once outside of Cape May, troubles set in. The wind kept in its old quarter, and consequently was directly in their teeth. Everard, tormented with sea-sickness, and miserable with mental troubles, seeing no way of escape from the web of treachery woven round him by the hand of his own father, was only conscious of being tossed about here and there, wishing he could die and end it all.

But at the end of the third day the schooner, which had been driven far out of her course in

beating up along the coast, experienced a change of wind. The sky cleared of the gray, murky clouds that had covered it, the wind chopped round to the south, south-west, and finally west, and the sun shone brilliantly out overhead. The vessel beat up toward Raritan bay, the gale from the west strengthening on the second day, but at last they sighted the low white coast of Sandy Hook, and beheld the sails of several men-of-war hovering about the coast, while the naked masts and yards of some more could be seen above the low ground of Sandy Hook.

Everard had come on deck, seduced by the fine weather, and nearly over his sea-sickness. He found his father eagerly inspecting the strange vessels through his telescope, while the little schooner held on her way toward the mouth of the harbor, with all her sails set as flat as a board, and eating up into the wind, point by point. There were nearly twenty of the strangers, most of them stately line-of-battle ships, with double rows of grinning black ports, lofty spars and immense yards. They were scattered about in a line, several miles in length, forming a half-moon, which inclosed the mouth of the bay within its sweep.

A high sea was running, sparkling brightly in the sun, and a keen cold gale was blowing straight out of the mouth of the harbor, rendering it a very difficult task to get in at all.

John Barbour noticed his son first.

"Ha! Everard. We shall not get in without some trouble, sir. There's the French fleet, under De Grasse, blockading our vessels. But they can't catch us, sir. Let them try."

As he spoke, the hostile fleet seemed for the first time to notice the approach of the tiny schooner, for one of the stately three-deckers that was lying hove-to, along with the rest, filled her maintopsail and came down, like a ponderous and unwieldy elephant marching to trample on a rat.

The schooner kept straight on her course, as if to meet the man-of-war, but, when within a few cable lengths, suddenly tacked, and ran under the first-rate's stern. The Frenchman, evidently thinking she was the bearer of some message, hove to, and in so doing, allowed the schooner to shoot to windward, while he drifted alee. The little schooner continued on her course without deigning to halt for the French ship, and was instantly warned of the danger by a gun fired from the dark sides of the ship. But the water was too rough for good practice, though the shot whistled between the schooner's masts, and Everard could see that the ruse practiced had put the whole line of the hostile fleet alee. It was all that was necessary. Large square-rigged ships as they were, they were nowhere in a chase dead to windward, after a Yankee schooner. The only danger remained in their guns, while the little vessel remained within range, and they apparently realized this. First one and then another of the ships opened fire on the audacious little hooker, that was laying over to the northwester, till the sea flowed in at her lee scuppers, hugging the wind closely, the shot flying over and around her, and sending showers of spray over her decks.

But, as if by a miracle, she was untouched by the first broadside, and after that the danger grew less every moment, with increasing distance. As if in saucy defiance, the red field and Union-jack of the British ensign was flung out over the taffrail of the little vessel, and greeted with a perfect tempest of shot.

"A miss is as good as a mile," quoth John Barbour, coolly, as he watched the harmless balls go skipping over the sea. "A little more, and hey! for old England."

Everard said nothing. His mood of mind was inexpressibly bitter. He was fatally compromised. Even if the French vessels took the schooner, how could he explain his own presence on board a blockade runner under the English flag? And yet the natural excitement of the chase had buoyed him up for awhile, till he saw that the schooner was fast dropping the men-of-war, and already had arrived close to Coney Island. As she "went about" for the opposite shore, she had again to run the gantlet of the fleet's broadsides, but they were at too great a distance now to be dangerous, and seemed to have come to the sullen conclusion that the impudent schooner must escape, for they remained hove to, and only a few long-range shots were fired, none of which damaged the schooner.

Once inside the harbor, John Barbour headed his course up the Narrows and spoke gravely to his son.

"Everard," he said, "you have worn that uniform long enough. If you wish to enter New York as a prisoner, you can do so, but I would advise you to go below and put on a suit of plain clothes. I am going to present you to Sir Henry Clinton as soon as we land. Decide quickly, and do not forget your real duty to your father in your own idea of duty to your country, as you call it."

Everard had been walking the quarter-deck, sullen and reserved, thinking over some means of escape from his predicament. As his father finished speaking, he turned and gazed

intently at the Brooklyn shore. He seemed to see something there.

"Tell me, sir," he said, pointing to a tall pole, with a cross-piece at the top, "what is that?"

"That? Why, that's a gibbet, boy."

"And they hang spies there, is it not so?" asked Everard.

"Yes," said John Barbour. "The last they hung was a fellow called Hale, that Washington sent out to spy on Howe's lines."

"Nathan Hale?" asked Everard, with a strange glitter in his eye.

"Ay, I believe so. Why do you ask?"

"No matter, sir," said Everard. "I have taken my resolve. Do with me as you will. I will join the British army if you wish."

John Barbour started back in surprise one minute, and then he wrung his son's hand warmly.

"I knew it, my boy," said the obstinate old Tory, choking with joy. "I thought you couldn't come here and see the good old flag of your king waving over his country, without your heart warming to it. Everard, you shall never repent it. Sir Henry Clinton has promised you a commission in the finest corps of soldiers on this continent, the glorious Queen's Rangers of gallant Simcoe. How do you like that, my lad?"

"It will do as well as any thing, I suppose, sir," said Everard, indifferently. "When a man turns traitor, it makes but little difference where he goes. You have your pleasure now. Do with me as you will."

"Then go down-stairs and get off that ugly dress that makes you look like a yellow bird," said John Barbour, sarcastically. "We call the men who wear it traitors, not those who come back to their duty at last. I tell you, sir, I am proud of my work so far. See that your obstinate folly does not make me repent I took the trouble. Go and dress, sir."

Everard turned on his heel, and went below, a strange expression of determination to do some deed especially hateful, impressed on his countenance.

"I will do it," he muttered to himself, below. "I have been the victim of fraud, and with fraud will I repay it. General, look to yourself. I have believed in you for a long time. Now I have found you out. *The world shall, soon.*"

Slowly he stripped off his uniform coat, and kissed the solitary epaulet sadly, as if in farewell.

"I cannot wear the colors of freedom," he said. "Then what matters what else I do wear? Let it be black, for my soul is in mourning."

He opened his valise, and took out a dark velvet suit, such as might be worn by any gentleman in those days, and in a short time was transformed from a Continental officer to a plain civilian.

He came on deck, to be warmly greeted by his father, and find the vessel to be nearing Governor's Island, while boats were pulling out to meet her from many places.

Inside of an hour they were safely moored close to the green slopes of the Battery, and Everard found himself entering the quarters of the enemy, arm in arm with his father. Every thing looked novel and exciting to him, the scarlet uniforms of the soldiers on guard at the quarters of the different superior officers, the British flag, which he had last seen wrapped in the smoke of battle, floating peacefully from the flag-staff on Fort George, which stood just where the Produce Exchange stands now. His father seemed to be well known to every one, for he was met with familiar greetings at every corner, and Everard had noticed before that no interruptions from guards or custom officers had taken place since their entering the harbor.

They went up Broadway till they approached Wall street, then the home of the ultra fashionables of New York, down which John Barbour turned. He had resumed the swagger which he had put on at Philadelphia, at the time he first met his son after their year's separation. John had put on all his fine clothes, and flourished a clouded cane with all the airs of a Macaroni or dandy of those days.

They turned down Wall street, and very soon stopped at a large brick house, at the door of which the elder Barbour knocked.

It was opened by a servant who seemed to think it was all right, for he ushered them in without a word; and Everard found himself, in a little more, standing in a large drawing-room, face to face with Charlotte Lacy!

CHAPTER XXVI.

AT HEAD-QUARTERS.

A SHORT, stout man, in a rich scarlet uniform, that proclaimed him a general officer in the British service, was seated at a table in a house at the bottom of Broadway, looking out of a window toward the mouth of the bay. A tall and exceedingly-handsome and elegant-looking officer stood respectfully near him, as if awaiting orders.

The room was one of those large, somewhat dingy apartments, full of solid comfort and intensely respectable ugliness, that were the rule

in New York in those days, and whereof a few specimens even now linger here and there in some localities.

A large sea-coal fire burned in the old-fashioned grate, for the day was intensely cold, as New York always is under the influence of a "north-wester" such as was then blowing.

"What schooner's that, major?" asked the stout general, pointing to a small schooner lying at her moorings by the Battery, rocking heavily. "I didn't see her there this morning."

"She only came in when we were at dinner, Sir Henry," answered the major. "That's the Sea Gull, sir. You remember hearing guns at Sandy Hook this morning? 'Twas the Sea Gull running the blockade, sir."

"Humph! humph!" said Sir Henry Clinton, for he it was. "Sea Gull, eh? Letters from our friend Gustavus, I suppose, eh, major?"

"I have just received one, sir," responded the officer. "We were right about the person. John Barbour and the Queen of our Secret Agents have both been shadowing him, and have indubitable proofs at last, that it is none other than the major-general who gave poor Burgoyne such trouble a year or two ago. By-the-by, general, Miss Lacy has sent word that she desires to wait on you. She arrived the day before yesterday."

"Humph! humph!" again grunted the baronet. "Seems to me, Andre, that you manage all these spies to please yourself. Why the deuce didn't you tell me about Miss Lacy before? I want to see her at once. Send a messenger for her."

"Very good, general," and the adjutant-general of the British forces wheeled about with military precision, and left the room.

Sir Henry Clinton was a very ordinary man, without little talent, raised by good luck to a position above his abilities. His fat, red face gave little token of any thing beyond the mediocrity of a regimental quartermaster. But Sir Henry Clinton was very fond of employing spies, and really imagined himself a second Richelieu in astuteness. Miss Charlotte Lacy, an ardent Royalist of very great talents and wealth, had been raised by him, from a variety of causes, to the position of chief of the detective service, with a vast number of agents in her employ, and the control of all the subsidies of money, then deemed so necessary in warfare, besides the presents given from year to year to the Indians. She had earned her position by her devotion to the royal cause, and the valuable intelligence she had frequently sent in. Her beauty, no doubt, was a considerable element in her favor with Sir Henry, for like most men of his build and face, the baronet was of a strongly amative temperament.

He remained looking out of the window at the schooner, half musing, half muzzy—for it was after dinner, and Sir Henry always finished his bottle of port at that meal—till Major Andre's return roused him from his somewhat confused reflections.

"Who owns the Sea Gull, Andre?" he abruptly inquired then.

"Mr. John Barbour, the Albany lawyer, who had all his property confiscated, and who has been one of our most valuable secret agents in Philadelphia," replied the major. "He has a pass from us to come and go freely, and, be-gad, Sir Henry, he's managed to procure one from the American Commander-in-chief himself, through our friend Gustavus."

The British general seemed to be greatly amused at this relation, for he laughed heartily. Then he inquired:

"And Miss Lacy—where is she?"

"If I mistake not, that is her carriage, now," said Andre, as the rumble of wheels became audible at the door. "I sent a mounted orderly, full speed, to her house, and I know her carriage has been waiting the message for over an hour."

The major was right. The clatter of the orderly dragoon in waiting was heard down the hall, the door flew open, and the orderly announced in a loud voice:

"Miss Lacy and Mr. Barbour!"

"Mr. Barbour, Mr. Barbour!" muttered Sir Henry, irritably. "What the deuce is Mr. Barbour to me? I didn't want Mr. Barbour."

The next moment he was mollified by the appearance of the lovely face and figure of Charlotte Lacy, who sailed in, dressed in the richest costume of that splendidly dressed era, followed by Everard Barbour, who remained modestly retired.

Miss Lacy advanced, with the high-bred ease and grace that seemed innate in her. She made a sweeping courtesy in return for Sir Henry's low bow, and permitted the gallant baronet to kiss her hand with perfect graciousness.

"Fairest Miss Lacy," said Sir Henry, in the grandiloquent fashion of the time, "you are a most welcome sight to your poor slave's eyes. You beam goodness from every line of your beautiful face."

"Thanks, general," she answered, smiling. "I have, indeed, brought good news, and a good friend to his majesty's service. Major Andre has, no doubt, told you part of my news already. We have found Gustavus, and I have seen him face to face. He will soon be ours, general."

All he wants is a good stiff price, and that I have promised him in your name."

"The promise shall be ratified," said Sir Henry, graciously. "Upon my honor, Miss Lacy, you are worth a dozen men to find out secrets. And who is this young gentleman?"

"The son of Mr. John Barbour, whom your Excellency knows. Till a week ago he was aid-de-camp to—whom think you?—to Gustavus! To-day he has returned to his duty and his king, and desires employment in his majesty's forces. General, I have promised it to him. Will you keep my promise?"

Charlotte Lacy seemed to be radiant with triumph at the final success of her plans. Everard mentally swore that she had never looked so beautiful before. Sir Henry Clinton, on his part, was unusually pleasant and gracious, for him. His manner was ordinarily very gruff and distant, making him quite unpopular among troops and citizens, but to-day seemed to have changed him. The news made him as radiant as Charlotte.

He grasped Everard's hand, shook it warmly, and said:

"You are welcome to his majesty's service, Mr. Barbour. Those repentant ones who abjure their errors as you have, and are ready to atone them by fighting on the right side, his majesty is always ready to pardon and reward. I promised your father a commission for a friend of his, in the Queen's Rangers. You shall have it, sir. Colonel Simcoe is going to review them here this very afternoon, so that you may see how you like your future comrades. You can see them from that window, for the first bugle has sounded already."

With that Sir Henry made a short, half-polite, half-imperative wave of the hand, as much as to say:

"Don't bother me any more. Good-morning, sir."

Everard found himself dismissed without an opportunity to say a word, while Sir Henry drew Miss Lacy to the further end of the room and engaged her in a long and mysterious conversation. The young man had nothing to do but obey Sir Henry's indication, and saunter to the window, where he stood looking down on the open expanse of the Bowling Green, then used as a drilling-place. Opposite to him was the wall of Fort George, the gates flanked by sentries in scarlet uniforms.

As Everard looked, the tears came to his eyes. He thought of the simple blue and yellow of his old companions, and wondered if he should ever see them again. He had entered the enemy's country, and was about the enter their service, resolved to escape the first opportunity, and turn his acquired knowledge to his country's service; but the part of spy revolted him, and he hated to begin it.

He stood by the broad window, looking down, and presently the sound of a cavalry bugle, blowing "To horse," struck his ear. The British signals were the same as those used by the Continentals then.

Soon he saw the sidewalks begin to be lined with rows of gazers, looking up Broadway, as if at something coming down, and he stretched his neck to see. Before long the form of a mounted officer came into view, and the band over at Fort George simultaneously struck up "God Save the Queen," while the people on the sidewalks cheered faintly. Everard could see that British troops occupying New York had not *loyalized* the inhabitants to any great extent, although they liked to see the brilliant parades.

He turned his eyes again up the street, and beheld the head of a column of cavalry, of most soldierly appearance, marching down six abreast, in better order than he had ever seen before.

Their uniform was remarkably picturesque, being in the beautiful and romantic huzzar fashion, of dark-green cloth, barred with black; the hanging jacket, trimmed with fur, slung gallantly over the left shoulder. The men all carried carbines and pistols as well as sabers, and their snow-white cords, and polished Hessian boots with black tassels, were the perfection of neatness and natty completeness.

The horses all seemed to step together, and the dressing of the sections of six was absolutely perfection, as Everard was forced to acknowledge to himself.

"Well, Mr. Barbour," said a voice close beside him, "do you think that General Washington has any better cavalry among his men than the Queen's Rangers? How do you like your future comrades, sir?"

Everard turned and beheld the handsome, smiling face of Major Andre.

"They are fine troops, sir," he answered, gravely. "Our men fought them at German-town the year before last, and beat them."

Andre smiled.

"And since then Colonel Simcoe has made soldiers out of recruits. Let us go down, sir. I will introduce you to Colonel Simcoe."

CHAPTER XXVII.

BETWEEN TWO FIRES.

We must pass over a period of more than a year, and bring the reader to the summer of

the year 1780, when a small party of cavalry in the dark and handsome uniform of the Queen's Ranger Hussars, were riding slowly along a narrow country lane in the vicinity of Paulus' Hook (now Jersey City). The men were all stout, active young fellows, who rode with their carbines at the "advance," the butt resting on the hip, while their keenly observant look, scanning the fields on every side, announced that they were scouting in dangerous ground. They rode in a small, compact body, with a single vedette about two hundred paces in front, another the same distance in the rear, while two more occupied the flanks, and kept a wary look-out through the fields.

Along with the advanced vedette rode a young officer, whose handsome dress bore the gold-lace adornments of a captain, on the sleeves. It was none other than Everard Barbour, to all appearance an active partisan officer of the British, by this time.

The country around them was flat, and rich, the fields heavily loaded with wheat, nearly ripe for the sickle, while patches of wood here and there, scattered thickly over the face of the country, showed how lately it had been reclaimed from the forests that once covered it.

The young captain was out on a scout on the extreme right of the British forces, which had recently landed near Elizabethport, and were advancing on Washington's forces at Morristown. The country between them seemed to be entirely deserted, and the few houses the scout-party had met with were empty of people. Everard looked anxious and careworn. For over a year he had been trying to make his escape, and had been so closely watched as to render it impossible. During all the time subject to the subtle influence of Charlotte Lacy, and believing Marian Neilson false, he had been sorely tempted to make his desertion real; and yet some lingering sentiment of suspicion that all was not true that he had been told, kept him faithful. He was not even engaged to be married to Charlotte, spite of his father's constant urgings and the open encouragement given him by the lady.

And now, at last, convinced of his fidelity to their cause, the British Generals had trusted him out on a reconnaissance with a portion of his own troop, to ascertain the location of some light troops of the enemy, said to be hovering between Morristown and Paulus' Hook.

"There goes a rebel, captain!" said the advanced vedette, suddenly, pointing across a field to the left front.

Everard looked, and beheld a man on a black horse, dressed in the pale half-frock of his old friends, Morgan's Rangers, galloping at an easy pace across a flat in plain view, making for a wood to the right. The young captain reined up his own magnificent animal, a perfect thoroughbred, and put him at the low, snake fence at the side of the road.

"Wait for me, boys," he said, briefly, and dashed across the field toward the strange horseman.

He had formed a plan of escape already.

The stranger did not appear to be at all alarmed at the approach of a single enemy. On the contrary, he deliberately turned his horse toward the rail fence which still separated them—for he was one field off—unslinging the short rifle at his back, and threw it into the hollow of his left arm, as if not deigning to shoot.

Everard drew a pistol as he came, and imitated his companion's motion.

He, too, rode up to the fence, and gazed across it, with almost doubting eyes, upon the face and form of Double-Death the scout!

Tim knew him at a glance, though Everard was far the most altered of the two. The Irishman's face gathered into a stern frown, and he looked grim and joyful at the same time, as he said:

"So Mither Barbour, I've met ye at last, have I?"

"You have indeed, Tim," said Everard, sadly; "and I suppose, like the rest, you think me a traitor and turn-coat?"

"Bedad, I don't think it, at all," said Tim, sternly. "Didn't I know it when ye deserted poor Miss Marian, the angel, for the beautiful she-devil, the Spy Queen, as they call her? By the howly Cross, Mither Barbour, ye did a foolish thing to gallop here to mate me to-day."

"You're wrong, Tim," said Everard, quietly. "I carry my life in my own hand, and a pistol is as good as a rifle here."

"Maybe yes, maybe no," said Tim, still frowning. "What did ye come here for, anyway? Is it to ask if Miss Marian's alive? She is, no thanks to you, ye traitor."

"I supposed as much," said Everard, stung by the scout's tone. "I hope she enjoys the society of her husband, Black Eagle. I have heard all about their precious marriage."

Tim looked half angry, half puzzled as he said:

"Black Eagle! What the devil are ye talkin' about? Black Eagle was kilt at the Chemung, a year ago, and Tim Murphy's the b'y that shot him."

"And I suppose that his widow is quite ready to be consoled," said Everard, sneeringly. "I wonder you don't make love to her, Tim?"

"Widdy! Black Eagle, is it? Sure he left

none," said Tim, simply. Astonishment seemed to be taking the place of anger for a while.

"Well, then, call her Marian Neilson," said Everard, impatiently. "Why don't you marry her, if you're so fond of her?"

"Is it me, now?" asked Tim. "Sure and I haven't a chance. If she hadn't 'a' made me promise not to hurt yez, ye'd 'a' been a dead man afor now, Mither Barbour. And I'm thinkin' she's jist a fool to care for yez at all, afther ye've been and coorted the Jezebel Spy Queen for two years."

Everard started.

"Stop, Tim," he said, in trembling tones. "Do you mean to tell me that Marian Neilson has not been married all this time to Black Eagle, chief of the Senecas, as I was told?"

"Who tould ye?" demanded Tim, fiercely. "He's a lyin' son of a say-cook, that's what he is, the man that tould ye. Didn't I resky her myself from the claws of Black Eagle, two years ago, and didn't the purty creature kape me from killin' him, and he near dyin' then? Marry an Injun, bedad! Have ye no betther stoor than that to hide yer tr'ason behind, Mither Barbour?"

Everard did not notice Tim's last words.

"Will you swear that Marian is true, and has been true to me all this time?" he asked, eagerly.

"And more's the pity," said Tim, sulkily. "Yes, she is."

"Then thank Heaven I am not too late!" ejaculated Everard.

"Too late!" said the scout in surprise. "What d'ye mane?"

"I mean that I am not the traitor you have supposed me," said Everard.

"Not a traitor?" and Tim Murphy's countenance lightened up. "Prove that, liftinant, and Tim Murphy'll be the roud b'y this day. But no, ye can't. Ye're only foolin' me. Can ye deny the bloody British uniform?"

Everard drew a letter from his breast.

"Look here, Tim," he said. "If ever you loved me in the past, and if ever you loved America, take this letter to General Washington. It is too long a story to tell now, but I am not the traitor I seem. A terrible danger menaces this country from a quarter you little expect, and this letter contains the proofs of treason in one so near to the Commander-in-chief that he does not believe it possible now."

Tim took the letter and put it in his breast.

"And what'll yez do yerself?" he asked, nodding toward the party of Queen's Rangers, who seemed to be uneasy, for they were riding up and down behind the road fence, as if looking for an opening.

"I go back," said Everard firmly. "I brought these poor fellows into danger, and I must take them out before I escape myself."

Tim smiled sarcastically.

"It's too late, liftinant," he said. "Look yonder."

Everard started, and beheld several horsemen, with glittering weapons on the other side of his party, cutting off their retreat to the British forces. Without another word, he turned and galloped back to his men, bound in honor as he felt to share their perils and bring them out safe. Compelled as he had been by circumstances to act the part of a spy and traitor to the British, he could not yet bring himself to sacrifice the lives of honest soldiers, who fought under a conviction of duty.

He was greeted with some confusion by his men.

"The rebels have cut us off, captain," said one.

"They came when you were talking to that countryman," said another.

"We'll have to fight our way back, sir."

Everard scanned the intercepting party through his telescope. They were about as numerous as his own men, and had halted across the road as if to bar retreat to the Queen's Rangers.

He looked round for Tim Murphy and the scout had disappeared. He must have gone off at a rapid pace. Judging from the quiet halt of the enemy Everard presumed that they must be awaiting reinforcements, and felt secure of their prey. They were not regular troops. He was sure of that from their lack of uniform. He recognized them at a glance for a troop of those infamous ruffians who vacillated from one side to the other, for purposes of plunder, called alternately "Cowboys" and "Skinners," according to the side under which they took service.

His natural hesitation to fight against the Continental troops was banished from the moment he saw the foes he had to deal with. It was good service to either side to clear off such scums as these.

"Boys," said Everard to his men, who were gathered in the lane, uncertain which way to go, "we must drive those fellows out of our road, back. I've found what we wanted to know, and that man was a secret agent of ours, with whom I was talking. Take down a panel of that fence."

Instantly one of the men was off his horse, and a panel of the loose snake fence was hurriedly thrown down, over the ruins of which the

horses of the Queen's Rangers bounded into the field, and formed line.

The Skinners were in another field, on either side of the road, and there were several gaps in the fence, so that the way was clear between them.

"Draw pistols and charge!" cried Everard, and away went the little body in a straight unwavering line, in admirable order, full speed on the enemy. The Skinners commenced firing from on horseback, as soon as the Rangers started, a sure sign of confusion with horsemen. The Rangers never fired a shot till they were close by, and then they sent a volley in and drew their sabers. The shock was momentary only. The undisciplined miscreants composing the Skinners fled at the first blow of the well-trained Rangers, and the way seemed open to Elizabethport, when the sound of a bugle was heard from a wood at the side of the road. It blew the charge!

The next minute, with a shock at his heart he never forgot, Everard recognized the uniform of his own old regiment, the Third Dragoons, as a whole squadron of them swept out full speed from the wood, and charged the unhappy Rangers full in flank.

There was no stopping those fellows. Everard knew them in a moment, and turned his horse to flee. The English rangers saw the madness of resistance and turned also. In an instant the fortune of the day was changed, and Everard was a fugitive from his old comrades, galloping as fast as his horse would go. Luckily for him that horse was a splendid animal, capable of clearing any fence or ditch. His followers were not so well off. Everard knew that the first fence would see most of them taken prisoners.

He went straight for the field in which he had met Murphy, and the gallant horse cleared the high rail fence, far in advance of the heavy chargers of the dragoons. Everard pulled up and looked round. As he had anticipated, pistol-shots and saber-cuts were exchanging on the other side of the first fence, and his poor followers were surrendering to his old comrades, right and left.

It was a strange feeling that animated his bosom as he looked, half regret, half pride, and then it was turned into anxiety for his own fate, for what should he do if he was taken prisoner now, but suffer the death of a deserter? He knew he had no mercy to expect from his old comrades, yet.

"I must flee," he said to himself, "till Washington has seen my letter. Then I shall have a chance."

The whistle of several bullets round his ears announced to him that some of his old friends, even if stopped by the fence, were disposed to try the range of their carbines on him. He made no more delay, but turned his horse and galloped away across another field, at the end of which a broad ditch formed the boundary. The horse cleared it with ease, and Everard found himself in an open wood, where the underbrush had been cleared away, and everything gave signs that he was approaching a house. Presently he spied a broad green lane, leading in the direction of the river, and down this he galloped full speed, feeling confident that he had thrown out most of his pursuers by cutting off corners.

In a few minutes more the woodland road led him into some open glades, apparently artificial, and he saw at the end of one of these the well-kept beds and brilliant flowers of a garden, surrounding a large and handsome house.

There was no fence, and the young officer galloped across the garden, heedless of the destruction he committed, out upon a broad smooth lawn that lay behind it, and then pulled up suddenly, petrified with surprise and dismay. The lawn and house were at the very edge of the Palisades, and a sheer precipice of rock forbid all further progress. Frantically he wheeled his horse, and dashed along the edge of the cliffs, trying to think of a way of escape. He knew that if he rode up the river, he was riding toward the American encampments, and if down, numerous pursuers were after him. The first way there was a bare possibility of escape. The last there seemed none.

Setting his teeth, he galloped away up the river, along the edge of the cliffs, to try the desperate chance of running the gantlet and swimming the river, if a boat was unprocurable.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TIM MURPHY'S HALT.

A PARTY of young men, three in number, were lurking at the edge of a wood about three miles beyond the spot where Everard had been taken in ambush so cleverly. They wore the half-civil, half-military dress, which, with their arms and the place where they were, sufficiently announced their occupation. They were the bandits of the Neutral Ground, whether Cowboys or Skinners it was difficult to tell, for they were accustomed to change sides about once a month for the sake of plunder.

All three were lurking close to the road, so as to command it, themselves unseen, and to be able to spring out in a minute on any one.

"Look out, Brown," said one of them. "I

hear a fellow coming at a gallop. Let's plug him, whoever he is."

"Maybe he's one of *our* side," returned Brown, with a leer. "You wouldn't plug a good Briton, would ye, Williams?"

"Jess as soon as Johnny Bull, ef he had the rhino," said Williams, laughing coarsely. "Let's plug him, whoever he is. Hey, Paulding, ain't that so—hey—old boy?"

The one called Paulding was the best looking of the three. He made no reply but a signal for attention, as the gallop of a horse became plainly audible on the road. The next moment a horseman came tearing around the corner of the wood at full speed, and all three of the bandits sprung out and presented their muskets, shouting, *Halt!*

The stranger was none other than Tim Murphy, and the scout was not the man to be stopped with impunity. A pistol leaped from his holster the very instant the first bandit confronted him, and he shot the nearest man through the body and dashed on. But the second, with presented bayonet, was already in front of the horse, and the animal shied violently. The third man clubbed his musket at the same moment, and dealt Tim a blow on the side of the head, with such force that the rifleman dropped senseless from his horse, and the second man seized the creature by the bridle. The man who had knocked down Double-Death sprung on him as he lay, and at once proceeded to rifle him of all his movables, with a dexterity that told of long practice.

The man called Paulding led the horse into the wood, and fastened it to a tree, when he returned to the place where Brown was rifling Tim Murphy's body. Williams lay in the road, bleeding profusely, and evidently almost dead.

"Say, Paulding," said Brown, ferociously, "let's kill the darned thief. He's shot Williams."

"Not while I'm here," said Paulding, firmly. "The man only defended his life, and he sha'n't be murdered."

"Murdered!" said the Skinner, sarcastically. "Who talks of murder? Ain't we soldiers of his majesty this arternoon? Let's kill the darned rebel."

"You may be a Tory. I'm not," said Paulding. "We've done enough to the poor fellow. Let's tie him to a tree and go. We've got a horse and money. You keep the money, and I'll keep the horse."

"See you in Tophet first," responded Brown, politely. "Didn't I knock the man down?"

"And didn't I catch his horse?" asked Paulding. "What are you talking of? I say you sha'n't murder that man in cold blood."

"And I say I'm a-goin' to finish him," said Brown, fiercely; "and here goes for his heart. Dead men tell no tales."

As he spoke he drew from his belt a long dirk-knife, and kneeling over the prostrate scout, was about to stab him, when Paulding ran forward and gave him a kick on the side of the head that sent him reeling to the earth several paces off. With a furious oath the bandit ran to pick up his still undischarged musket, when Paulding leveled his own, and called out:

"Don't ye try it, Dick Brown, or I'll plug ye, sure as fate."

His voice and manner showed that he was in grim earnest, and the bandit quailed for a moment. Then he said:

"Darn it all, Jack! Ye wouldn't shoot yer own camrad, would ye now? I won't touch the feller, ef ye don't want me to."

Paulding was about to answer, when the same sound struck the ears of both at the same time. It was the gallop of a horse coming over the fields, on the other side of a belt of wood that here bordered the road on both sides.

"More plunder," said Brown, rubbing his hands. "Say, Jack, let's be friends. We two can't afford to quarrel."

"Get the bodies out of the way," said Paulding, hurriedly. "No—it's too late."

As he spoke the gallop of the horse sounded among the trees, and a mounted officer, in the uniform of the Queen's Rangers, burst in on the road, pistol in hand. The two bandits leveled their muskets and fired hastily at him, but without effect. The next minute he had ridden over Paulding, knocking him down, and had shot Brown dead, the pistol being so close to his head as to singe the hair.

Before Paulding could rise, the officer had drawn a second pistol, and was standing over him, saying, sternly:

"Surrender, fellow, or die like a murderous dog as you are."

Paulding bowed his head, in token of submission, and Everard, for it was he, continued:

"What were you doing here?"

"Looking out for stragglers from the battle, Cap," said the man, humbly. "One of our fellows had knocked down one of Morgan's Rangers, and was going to slit his throat, when I stopped him. You came up when we were fighting. Do what you like. I'm tired of this life."

Everard ordered him to get up and follow him, and they went to the body of poor Tim Murphy, on beholding which Everard said:

"See here, villain. If you have killed that man, I'll blow out your brains."

"He ain't dead, Cap," said Paulding. "Dick Brown hit him a lick with his musket-butt, that's all. He's coming to now."

And indeed it was true. Tim Murphy possessed a skull too hard to be broken easily, and just then rubbed his eyes, sat up and said, on seeing Everard:

"Liftinint, they've got the letther."

"Who?" demanded Everard, anxiously.

Mr. Murphy scratched his head dubiously.

"Sorra one o' me knows. They gave me a clout that knocked the sivin senses out of me, bedad, and we in our own counthry; but the letther's gone, and all me money."

And he felt ruefully in his pockets.

"Go search your dead companion," said Everard, sternly, to Paulding, "and bring back all he took from my friend here."

Paulding looked surprised at a British officer claiming friendship with one of Morgan's Rangers, but he did as he was bid without any useless words, and brought back to Murphy his money and the letter.

Tim was quite restored now.

"Where's me horse, ye spalpeen?" he demanded of the cowed bandit. Without a word Paulding pointed him out, tied to a tree close by.

Tim walked up to the animal and led him out.

"Maybe ye know him, liftinant," he said.

"It's the same baste ye rode into Wyoming two years ago, and, bedad, a betther horse never stepped. I'll do yer errand, sir, for the sake of Miss Marian, and I'm hopin' it's all right; but, by the powers, liftinant, them clothes give ye a quare look inside our lines, and if ye take me advice, ye'll get them off pretty quick. They're purty and iligant, I'm not denyin', but give me the ould blue and buff for comfort, liftinant. *It laves room for an honest heart to bate.*"

And Tim rode slowly off on the road to Morristown, leaving Everard alone with Paulding, pondering over the bitterness of his position.

The bandit was the first to break the silence.

"Captain," he said, "I know you. I saw you with Sir Henry Clinton in the Dutch church, when you came to look at the prisoners. You're in a bad fix here. You've spared my life, and I'm the only one that can save you, if you'll reward me. I'm not a Tory, though those two other fellows were."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE NEUTRAL GROUND.

EVERARD looked doubtfully at the other for a moment.

"Who are you?" he said.

"I'm a good patriot," said Paulding, sturdily; "and so, I take it, are you, in spite of the Ranger uniform. I belong to the Westchester county militia, and I got taken prisoner a few weeks ago, and carried to New York by a squad of your regiment, the Queen's Ranger Hussars. I saw you when I was in the prison in North Dutch Church, and heard you called Captain Barbour. There was a man there belonging to the Third Continental Dragoons, and he told me how you'd deserted from Philadelphia when you were on some general's staff, and, putting this and that together, I've come to the conclusion that you ain't what you seem to be. You look too good for a traitor."

"And what are you?" asked Everard.

"Well, we're in the same boat, Cap," returned Paulding. "You're in disguise, and so am I. I got out of the prison in the church, and couldn't pass the lines no way, except by swimmin' the river. I got here and joined the fellers you see here. Both of 'em were rank Cowboys, and death on us Yankees, so I had to turn Cowboy, and rob my own side to save my life. Not but what they'd 'a' skinned a Britisher as quick as wink if they'd 'a' been able to find 'em, but there weren't many in these parts."

"Well," said Everard, "and suppose I trust you, how do you propose to get me out of the scrape? My pursuers may very likely be not far off now."

"You must turn Skinner," said Paulding, promptly. "Leave your horse, take off that dress, and cross the river with me. Once on the Neutral Ground, we're all safe."

Everard sighed.

"Leave my poor horse?" he said. "Alas, he is all I have now."

"Well, Cap, if ye want to be hung for a spy, ye can stay," said the Skinner, firmly. "That horse can't cross no river, and our path lies right over the edge of that bank."

He pointed through the woods beyond them, where the white line of the water could be seen through the trees, and the edge of the precipice called the Palisades was plainly discernible.

"We've got a boat at the foot of the rocks," he said, "and we were going to cross to the Neutral Ground this very night. Will you come with me?"

"I will," said Everard, making his determination. "I may as well trust you as any one. I am a patriot officer, involved in a vile plot by royal spies. To save my life and honor I pretended to desert to the British, but only to gather a sufficient quantity of intelligence to be of value to the Commander-in-chief. That letter

the ranger carried away contains the news. Till that reaches him I am liable to be shot as a deserter. If it goes safe, I shall soon be safe too. Now let me see what you can do to save your country and help me."

"Very good, Cap," said Paulding, respectfully. "I can tell an officer when I see him. Now, sir, you must strip off those British clothes and put on Jim Williams's duds. You're about a size. Over in the Neutral Ground I've got lots of friends, and we'll join a band of Skinners till you hear news that'll do you good. Come, sir, we hain't no time to lose. All this shooting will bring down dragoons pretty soon."

Everard saw the justice of the remark.

It grieved him sorely to part with his noble horse, but it was a stern necessity. Occupied as the country was by regular troops, he was not safe a minute where he was.

In the Neutral Ground of Westchester county he would be safe, for a while, and could hear news from Murphy.

And what was this Neutral Ground?

It was a belt of country surrounding New York, and stretching to within a few miles of the American outposts.

It was called the "Neutral Ground," and might have been a very pleasant place to live in, but for one unpleasant fact.

Neutral Ground was a misnomer.

It should have been called "Common Ground."

It was common to both parties, and the only neutrals who lived on it were the poor farmers.

They were impartially plundered by both sides.

The State of New York, in its wisdom, had enacted a law that any person or persons found driving cattle over this Neutral Ground, toward New York, should be adjudged enemies of the State, as giving aid and comfort to the British.

Consequently they might be fired on by any good patriot, who might also convert the cattle to his own use.

The last clause made this the most popular of laws. It gave cattle to any one who could shoot a Tory or catch a cow grazing with her nose toward New York.

This was not the original intention of the law, perhaps, but it was its effect. The result was that a class of gentlemen betook themselves to finding cattle for a living, not being very particular as to where they found them. It was always easy to swear that the cattle were being driven to New York "to help the blasted Britishers."

The blasted Britishers retaliated, and made midnight raids on the cow-houses of their Westchester neighbors, far and near.

From their peculiar way of warfare, the irregular troops on both sides acquired the name of "Cowboys."

Finally the British became so hungry after beef in New York that their parties became strong enough to drive out those of the other persuasion, and the name of "Cowboy" became applicable only to the British military thieves.

The sons of liberty and plunder on the other side of the Neutral Ground saw their usual stolen beef cut off, and were compelled to hang around the skirts of the American army proper, earning a precarious livelihood by occasional raids on the unhappy farmers.

They, poor creatures, had lost almost all they had, and it was difficult to get any more out of them.

The thieves were equal to the emergency, and pulled up the vegetables in the gardens, besides stripping the poor people of their clothes.

From this excess of administrative ability they obtained the name of "Skinners," and they deserved it.

It was to a band of these interesting gentlemen that our unfortunate hero was about to be introduced, and to which he unwillingly followed Paulding, as the only means of escape before him from the certain ruin of capture in New Jersey by his old regiment.

He descended the Palisades with some difficulty, by a cleft known to Paulding, leaving his horse turned loose to graze, and crossed the river in a boat, once more a penniless fugitive, now liable to be shot by either side.

It was sunset when the two men pulled from shore.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE SKINNERS' RECRUIT.

NOT far from Tarrytown stood a large deserted farm-house, in the middle of neglected fields. It was at the edge of the Neutral Ground, and had suffered heavily from the war. Cowboys and Skinners had alike been impartial in plundering the unhappy owner, and the latter, finally disheartened by his many losses, had abandoned his farm, and gone off no one knew where.

On the night of the day in which Everard made his escape with John Paulding, a number of men were gathered together in this old house, which was quite sheltered from view in the midst of thriving orchards, the only remains of cultivation left now. They were seated or lying down on the bare floor of the large old-fashioned kitchen—all the furniture of the house had disappeared long before—talking to

gether lazily, with a general aspect of waiting for some one or something. A fire burned in the large fire-place, made of the dryest kind of timber cut and squared to all appearance for other purposes. What it was, and the reckless character of the men, could be inferred from the blows of an ax in the very next room, and the fall of plaster. Some one was hacking down the partition of a room to make firewood of the studs and laths.

"Hillo, Van Wart, hurry up with your wood! Fire's getting low," growled a spotted-faced young man in homespun suit, who lay on the floor, with the butt of a rusty fowling-piece for a pillow.

"Come and help cut yourself, you lazy loafer!" responded the amiable voice of the chopper in the next room. "Darned if I'm going to do all the work to heat your carcasses. I'm through for to-night."

Presently the sound of a heavy fall of plaster was heard, followed by breaking wood; and a stout, sturdy-looking young fellow, with the face of mingled cunning and stupidity that belongs to the country bumpkin, toiled into the room, slowly lugging behind him three or four square studs in a bundle. He tramped across the floor, regardless of any one lying in the way, and cast down his burden with a crash that shook the whole house, saying:

"Look out for your legs, Jim Requa. I've done. You can cut them up, if you like."

The spotty-faced youth jumped up nimbly enough, for the heavy studs had nearly fallen on his feet.

"Where's the ax, you darned fool?" was the polite question.

"Next room, you darned fool," was the equally polite reply, and a horse-laugh from the other loungers greeted the rustic attempt at wit.

"You better leave Ike alone, Jim Requa," remarked one of them, a heavily-built man, with a black, saturnine face. "He kin whip the hull head off you, and slang you to death besides. Take the ax and chop up them studs, and shut up yer head."

Mr. James Requa looked sulkily at Ike Van Wart; but the latter looked particularly burly just then, and the spotty-faced youth turned and went into the next room, whence he returned with the ax.

The vengeful way in which Jim Requa made the chips fly, cutting up those studs on the kitchen floor, was painful to see. He sent one flying into Van Wart's eye, and maliciously prolonged his work so as to give the greatest discomfort to all present, eliciting many an oath and threat of vengeance if he didn't "quit foolin'." But James seemed quite determined to have a row; and a row he had soon enough, for Ike Van Wart jumped up and sent him spinning into the fire, which was the signal for a general free fight, in which this happy family tumbled about on the floor, biting, scratching, and gouging with refreshing ardor.

In the midst of the turmoil, when the battle was at its height, the sound of a shrill whistle without put a stop to it. Every man let go of his neighbor, and scrambled to his gun, which lay, rusty and dirty, in some corner, and then ran to the windows to look out, as if expecting some one.

"Here he is! here comes Cap!" cried several voices, as two figures approached the door in the darkness.

"Tain't Cap, fellers. It's me, Jack Paulding," called out one of the men outside, in defiance of grammatical propriety. "Me and another feller, and we've got news for yer."

There were general exclamations of welcome as Paulding approached. He seemed to be a favorite with his old comrades, who were the identical band of Skinners he had promised Everard to conduct him to. He now came in at the door, accompanied by the latter, who was completely disguised in the shabby old clothes of the dead Williams.

"Say, fellers," said Paulding, as his friends crowded around him; "I've brought a recruit to ye, and his name's Dave Williams. He's a reg'lar snorter to fight, he is, and me and him we got out of the old Dutch Church in Fair* street together, swum the river, and we've been hangin' around over in Jersey, makin' a livin'. He wants to jine us. Will ye have him?"

"Sartin."

"Why not?"

"Hooroar fur Dave Williams!"

Exclamations of this sort greeted our hero, who was too much embarrassed by the novelty of his position to say much in reply.

Paulding relieved him of the necessity by continuing his remarks to the select company assembled.

"Say, fellers, that ain't all I've got to tell yer. Me and Dave here, we had to make a boat t'other side of the river afore we could cross, and we cum over just arter sunset. Don't ye think, now! we seen a English man-of-war

a-lyin' in the river, up to Haverstraw. So me and Dave we pulls up as near her as we could get, and seen a boat put off from t'other side and a officer in a red coat landed over on our side the water. Now, fellers, there's some bloody treason a-goin' on there, and me and you kin make the rhino ef we find out all about it—hey, fellers?"

The information roused the curiosity of the Skinners, and a consultation took place at once, as to the best course to be pursued to make money off the secret, for that was the ruling motive with both Cowboys and Skinners. In the midst of the consultation a second whistle without announced the presence of the captain of the band, and he speedily entered, a man of great size, with a fierce, brutal expression of face. He had formerly been a regular soldier, but had been drummed out of the army for plunder and insubordination, and had become the leader of one of the gangs of desperadoes known as Skinners, which was now assembled in the house.

Under his advice it was resolved that one of the party should be dispatched to Morristown, to inform the Commander-in-chief, and claim a reward for the intelligence of the landing of the British officer, while others should man a boat and prowl round the English vessel, in the hope of making more discoveries.

A third portion of the band was to watch the roads in the neighborhood of Tarrytown, and stop any one coming from up the river toward New York. In this portion of the band, Everard and Paulding found themselves, the former under the assumed name of Dave Williams. They were joined by Ike Van Wart and four others, and Ike observed, with great satisfaction:

"We'll have easy times, fellers. I kin sit on my hinder end on the grass and watch a road as good as the next man. Let 'em go, them other fellers. Ef they finds out any more nor we do, I'm satisfied."

Their plans settled, the whole of the amiable crew wrapped themselves in horse-blankets, etc., and stretched themselves round the fire to sleep for the night, Everard's last waking thought being:

"Has the general got my letter yet?"

He knew more of the British man-of-war at Haverstraw than any of his new comrades, but he did not propose to tell his knowledge, till the right time came.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE PRIZE.

Two days after this four men were seated on the top of a low swell of ground back of Tarrytown, overlooking the road toward White Plains, and commanding a view of the whole country for some distance beyond.

A second party, three in number, were on the line of the road itself, where it ran into a hollow. Two of them were seated on the grass behind some bushes, playing cards, while the third stood near by, leaning on his musket and watching the road. This man, who was quite young, stood with his head just overlooking the swell of ground beyond, and commanding the road about a mile, while he himself would be unseen.

The sentinel was Everard Barbour.

His reflections were by no means pleasant. He had no means of receiving any intelligence from Murphy, and knew not how his letter had been received, and whether it was believed or not. That letter had contained important revelations, on which he knew that the safety of America hung. He had obtained indubitable proofs that his old general, whom he had loved and trusted so long, was really and truly a traitor, in correspondence with the enemy.

Could it be possible that Murphy had missed Washington? If so, he might be too late. The British vessel up the river, the officer landed on the other side, Everard knew who they were, and ere this that officer might be back in New York, with the plot consummated which was to give up the line of the Hudson to the British without striking a blow. As Everard thought of these things, his head seemed to swim, and the gay, careless voices of his two companions, joking and laughing over their cards, grated on his ears.

"Say, Jack, you ain't no great hand at seven-up," said the rough voice of Van Wart. "Ain't there no other game you kin play better? Here, you go and take Dave's musket, and let him come and play. I feel like beatin' a couple of fellers to-day."

"I don't want to play," said Everard, curtly. "Go on, yourselves. I prefer to stand sentry."

"Needn't be so short about it," said Ike, grumbling. "Don't believe ye c'u'd play me, ef yer tried to. Yer ain't no great shakes, no-how. Come, Jack. May as well beat you another game."

And they dealt the cards for a fresh hand, while Everard resumed his long watch on the road. In the passage of his thoughts he almost forgot what he was about, and started with as much surprise as if he had been asleep, when he became aware that a horseman was riding toward him in full view, who must have been so

for some time, although he had failed to notice him in his own abstraction.

He looked steadily at the advancing stranger, who was, to all appearance, a citizen, but who yet sat in his saddle with an air and carriage that told of the dragoon.

The young man thought, too, that he recognized the other as he came nearer, but he was uncertain. If his suspicion was correct, Everard felt that his future was safe.

"Paulding, Ike, quick, some one comes!" he said, in a low tone. "Take your posts and be ready for him. He may be a prize worth taking."

The two Skinners jumped to their feet in a moment. Ike Van Wart ran along the other side of the road, hidden by the bushes, while Paulding took his station, ready to jump into the road a little below. Everard remained where he was, unseen by the approaching horseman, till the latter was close enough for his features to be distinguished. Then the young man muttered to himself:

"Heavens! it is as I thought. It is Major Andre himself coming back, and the plot has not been fulfilled yet."

He remained hidden where he was, till the horseman had passed him with perfect lack of suspicion. He well knew the handsome, clear-cut face of Major Andre, Clinton's adjutant-general, and he knew that he must be returning from the consummation of his bargain with the commander at West Point.

He could not bear to be the means of sending Andre to the doom of a spy, and yet he saw no alternative. Andre had been kind to him, but the welfare of his country was at stake, and besides that, his own reputation.

Major Andre passed Everard unconsciously, to be met a few paces further by the presented musket of Paulding, who shouted:

"Halt, sir, whoever you are, or you're a dead man!"

The astonished officer pulled up his horse and demanded:

"Why do you stop me, gentlemen? What party do you belong to?" as Van Wart stepped out of the bushes and seized the horse by the bridle.

Everard showed himself a little distance off at the same time, but kept his face hidden by slouching his hat.

"Why do you stop me, gentlemen?" repeated Andre, looking from one to the other, and endeavoring to ascertain from their dress who they were. "You belong to our party don't you?"

"Ay, ay," replied Paulding, evasively. "Of course we do. Lower Party, eh?"

"I thought so," responded Andre, joyfully. "Then if you belong to the Lower Party you won't stop me, of course. I'm a British officer on my way to New York with dispatches. So good-day to you all."

"Not so fast," said Van Wart, his dull face lighted up with a gleam of cunning. "You say you be a British officer. Well, then, we don't belong to the Lower Party at all. We're good patriots."

"And you're our prisoner," said Paulding, sternly; "so get off your horse."

"What are you Americans?" asked the poor major, paling visibly.

"We're just that," said Van Wart, dryly.

"Oh! then it's all right," said Andre, eagerly. "I thought you were Cowboys, and so I told you that I was a British officer. But I'm not, boys. I'm a true American, and here's my pass from the commander at West Point."

Van Wart took it, and consulted doubtfully with Paulding. The pass was a regular one, and was signed—

"Benedict Arnold, Major-General, U.S.A."

"I want to get to White Plains in a hurry, boys," pursued Andre, anxiously. "Your general will be very angry if you detain me."

"What made ye say you was a British officer?" demanded Paulding, suspiciously. "This ain't all right, Cap, if the pass are."

"I tell you I thought you were Cowboys," said Andre, angrily. "Can't you understand, stupid? Let me pass."

For a moment the two Skinners hesitated. Everard observed it, and for the first time spoke:

"It's no use, sir. You'll have to dismount and be searched. You're not all right."

His words reassured the other two, who were beginning to be staggered by Andre's manner.

"Ay, ay, get off your horse," said Paulding. "You may be all right, but we'll have to see it first."

"Get off," snarled Van Wart at the same time, and he cocked his musket.

With shame and anger depicted on his face, Andre dismounted.

"You insolent hounds," he said, angrily, "you shall repent this outrage before long, when your general hears of it. Well, search, and much good may it do you."

He submitted with very poor grace to be taken to the side of the road, stripped, and examined. At first the searchers found nothing to reward them, except, indeed, a purse and watch, which they quietly appropriated, with

* Now Fulton street to the East river from Broadway. [The old North Dutch Church has now given place to a block of business buildings.] Fulton street to the North river was then called Partition street, as far as the Bear Market, now Washington Market.

true Skinner providence. Everard stood moodily by, looking on. The manner of proceeding adopted by his confederates was too much like that of robbers. As such Andre considered them, for he did not deign to remonstrate any more, submitting to his plunderers with sullen resignation. He was totally unarmed, probably the better to carry out the disguise he had assumed, otherwise he might not have submitted so quietly at first.

After the Skinners had stripped him to his underclothes they examined his boots, and having found nothing, were about reluctantly to allow him to take back his property, fearing that he might really be an American, when Everard again interposed.

He knew Andre well by sight, and might easily have settled the business at first by pointing him out, but it went against his sense of honor to repay the kindness he had received in such a manner.

But he also knew that Andre, coming from West Point, must have with him or about him something more valuable than money to him, and more dangerous to America.

The poor major was standing in his stocking feet in the damp grass, when Everard reluctantly spoke again.

"Boys," he said, "you must take off his stockings."

He noticed Andre turn visibly paler as he said it.

Instantly Paulding was down on his knees, and a cry of triumph broke from his lips as he seized the prisoner's foot. The rustle of papers was heard in the stocking.

From that moment Andre became sullenly resigned. He allowed them to take off his stockings and draw forth two papers, which both men immediately devoured with great curiosity.

"Why, this is a spy, Jack," exclaimed Ike Van Wart, eagerly.

His paper contained a diagram of West Point, with tables of the ordnance there, and the Skinner knew enough to be sure that any one carrying such news to New York must be a spy, although his lack of education prevented his understanding much more.

Paulding appeared to be puzzled with his. "What a cursed fist this fellow writes!" he grumbled. "Here, Williams, you take a look at this."

And he handed the paper to Everard, who took it with a hand trembling with eagerness, and looked over it.

"At last!" he ejaculated, as his eyes fell on the writing. "My God, I thank thee!"

His listeners were astonished at the exclamation, none more so than Andre, whose eyes fell on Everard's face for the first time.

"Captain Barbour!" he ejaculated, in a low tone of amazement.

Everard never heeded him.

"At last I have him," he said; "this general who ruined me and drove me forth an outcast, with a traitor's name! Now I have the proofs in your own hand, and now shall the world know Benedict Arnold!"

"Say, Dave, what ails ye?" asked Van Wart, astonished. "What in the old boy are you talkin' about?"

"The salvation of America!" said Everard, triumphantly shaking the paper. "These papers are worth more money than your ever saw, fool. As for the prisoner, ask him what he'll give us to set him free."

"Anything in the world, in reason," said Andre, eagerly. "What do you want? I'll give you a hundred pounds in money and five hundred more in goods, delivered at any place you like, if you'll let me go. My God, boys, I must get on, you know."

"If you was to offer us ten thousand golden guineas you couldn't stir a single step from this spot," said Paulding, fiercely. "My comrade he knows what's what, he does, and he says them papers is worth money. I guess they be."

"Come, old feller, get on yer duds," said Van Wart, briskly. "You've got to come along with us, you have. You're worth money, you are."

Andre said not a word, but resignedly finished his dressing.

Everard kept a little way apart, examining the paper he held, almost doubting his eyes as to whether it was real. He held in his hand a full agreement, in the handwriting of his own old general, Benedict Arnold, between him and Sir Henry Clinton, by which he agreed to deliver up the fortress and garrison to the British, in consideration of fifty thousand dollars and a brigadier-general's commission in the British service.

At last he held in his hand the proofs of Arnold's treason, and felt that his own honor was safe.

As he pondered, the prisoner finished dressing, and the little party proceeded on their way to North Castle, the nearest post of the American forces, where a few squadrons of dragoons were posted.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A GREAT MAN'S ANGUISH.

A TALL and peculiarly majestic-looking gentleman, in the uniform so dear to our eyes in

the portraits of WASHINGTON, sat in a tent by a table about ten days after the capture of the unfortunate Andre, and before him stood Everard Barbour, once more in the uniform of his old regiment. At the opposite side of the table sat a slightly-framed gentleman with a remarkably intellectual and handsome face, in the dress of a Continental colonel.

Tim Murphy, the Irish ranger, stood not far from Everard, and the chief was speaking to the former in his grave, quiet tones.

"Murphy," said the general, "Mr. Barbour has just come in to report, and it will depend upon your testimony whether he be restored to his place in the army and promoted for important services, or cashiered for desertion to the enemy. Two years ago you testified that you found the lieutenant in the valley of the Genesee, in the power of the enemy, and that he refused to escape, and remained with them, when you knew that both of you could have got off easily. Do you stand to that story now? If so, Mr. Barbour, I must order a court-martial upon you at once. You have rendered important services of late, but they cannot outweigh a single act of desertion."

"Your excellency will confer a favor on me by ordering a court-martial," said Everard, quietly. "I have but few witnesses to call, and must depend on my own statement to a great extent. Murphy, I know, will tell the truth, but I can show even him that he is mistaken."

"I hope you may, sir," said Washington, kindly. "Your position has been a hard one. I know, Mr. Barbour, and I am disposed to be lenient with you. But, sir," he added gravely, "when you remember what is taking place to-day, you will see that I cannot afford to be partial to my own officers, when I am compelled to be so severe on those of the enemy."

Everard bowed gravely. He knew what was meant by his chief.

Tim Murphy seemed to be oppressed with great grief, for the tears stood in the eyes of the stout ranger.

"Arrah, now, general," he began, pleadingly; "don't be too hard on the poor young liftinant. Sure, and if he did desert, he's come back to us again, and he's been the manes of turnin' out the bloody thafe, Arnold, bad scran to him. And sure yer ixcellency wouldn't have the heart to try him now, afther what he found out for ye in the British camp?"

Washington smiled faintly. Tim Murphy was a privileged character, and the general allowed things from him no other man could have attempted.

"Hamilton," he said, turning to the handsome colonel, "you'll have to tell our friend Tim that I can't allow him to remonstrate with me."

"Tim," said Colonel Hamilton, gravely, "you hear what the general says. If you didn't want Mr. Barbour tried, you shouldn't have made such an accusation against him as you did at Philadelphia, before the Judge Advocate."

"Arrah now, colonel dear, how can a poor fellow rimimber all he says?" said Tim, ruefully. "It's meself that wad like to cut me tongue out for hurtin' the unfortunate crature; but av I said it, colonel dear, I suppose I must stick to it, though it's never a time did I feel so much like lyin' to save a fri'nd."

Here the Commander-in-chief turned his grave, majestic face around on the other, and spoke severely to the scout:

"Murphy, it is never right to lie. See what lies brought another soldier to! Do you hear that band, sir, and do you know what it is for? Timothy Murphy, tell the truth, and leave the rest to God."

Tim bowed, and crossed himself reverentially. At that moment the solemn, mournful strains of the Dead March sounded through the camp, mingled with the deep roll of muffled drums, and all in the tent involuntarily stopped to listen.

The Dead March it was, indeed, with its grand bass chords and long solemn strains, announcing a funeral.

"Go, Hamilton, attend the funeral," said Washington, in a low voice. "It is a duty hard enough for me to have signed the order. Poor lad! So young and so gallant! Oh! Arnold! Arnold! The world will curse your memory for years untold, when they pity the poor lad that your treachery led to a felon's doom. Mr. Barbour, retire to your quarters. I will send you the order. Timothy, I put him in your charge. Go, gentlemen, go. The sound of that music is like the knell of my own son."

The usually stern and impassive chief of the Revolution seemed to be strangely moved, as he waved them away from the tent. Indeed, the kind heart and inflexible justice of this great man often cost him a severe contest to preserve his self-control. With all the tenderness of a woman, the general-in-chief possessed a sense of overpowering necessity for sternness, which made his life as a military commander one long struggle.

And he had, that morning, signed the order for the execution of the sentence passed upon Andre by a general court martial.

That sentence was death by hanging.

And the Dead March was beating for the funeral of the man himself.

Washington hurried his companions out of the tent, and then sat down and buried his face in his hands, shaking with emotion, when all alone.

The judge had condemned.

The general signed the death-warrant.

Washington, the man, wept in the silence of his tent for Andre.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE LOST STAR.

WHEN Everard and his companion stood outside of the tent, the camp below them presented a solemn appearance. All the troops were drawn up in front of their company streets, and all with reversed arms.

The strains of the funeral march came nearer and nearer, and they could see the escort slowly pacing onward toward them, the butts of their muskets upward in front, the muzzles trailing behind. The instruments of the band were covered with crape, and behind them followed four soldiers, bearing a coffin.

And behind the coffin, listening to the funeral march played for his own death, came the poor prisoner himself, Major Andre.

The tears rushed into Everard's eyes as he saw the calm, pale face, and heroic bearing of the unfortunate officer.

"I might have been there," he thought to himself, "but for the mercy of God; and had I not recognized poor Andre, he might now be safe and in honor."

Major Andre was dressed in full British uniform, for the British commander had obtained leave to send him in all the necessities he required, under a flag. As he passed Everard he looked up, and his eye met his. Everard bowed low, and Andre returned the courtesy gravely, holding out his hand.

The escort marked time for a few minutes, for the prisoner was treated with every possible lenity, consistent with the execution of his sentence.

Everard hurried forward and grasped Major Andre's hand warmly, saying:

"Major Andre, I sympathize with you from the bottom of my heart. Had the fortune of war been otherwise, I might be in your place."

"Sir," said Andre, gravely, "I forgive you. You have played a bold game, and you have won it. I have lost, and now I shall soon pay my losses."

He waved a courteous farewell, and Everard shrunk back into the crowd of staff-officers, who were gathered to see the funeral.

There were many stern looks and sour faces turned on the young officer, as he went toward the quarters of his regiment. It had been rumored about that he was a double deserter, who had tried to win his way back to favor by information of British movements, and such characters had but little favor among honest soldiers.

Everard heard more than one muttered remark:

"There's young turncoat, curses upon him!"

"Don't notice him, gentlemen."

"His own regiment won't associate with him."

He went slowly back toward the quarters assigned to him. They were in the rear of his own regiment, next to the guard-tent. Tim Murphy tried to console him, but he felt very much dejected. After all his trials, to be so treated by his old comrades was very hard.

What the staff-officer had said was true. His own regiment would not associate with him. He was compelled to stay in his tent, considering himself under arrest, with the consciousness that he had not one friend in the army, except, perhaps, poor Tim Murphy. The honest ranger was very much cast down about the effect of his own ill-considered accusation, two years before. With the warm-hearted impulsiveness of his race, he began to blame himself for having said so much under the influence of his misapprehension; and yet, as Everard pointed out to him, he had as little reason for trusting the latter now as he had for once accusing him of desertion.

"There are only two people who know the truth, Tim," said poor Everard; "and they are both in New York. I must stand my trial and trust to my innocence to clear me of the charge of desertion."

"And, bedad, av I knew who thim two people was," said Tim, "I'd bring 'em here and make them tell the truth. Innocence is a good thing, liftinant, but witnesses is better, bedad."

"And those witnesses I can not get, Tim," said Everard. "The one is my own father, and the other—I can not name her on my honor as a soldier."

Tim made no answer, and Everard relapsed into gloomy thought.

As he listened to the mournful strains of the Dead March, it seemed as if it were beating for his own funeral, and he shuddered as he thought of poor Andre. Presently the music ceased, and he knew that the gloomy procession had arrived at the place of execution. A solemn hush pervaded the camp, and Everard could almost hear the beating of his own heart.

Then there came a wild wail of mournful mu-

sie from the band, and the sullen boom of a gun announced that all was over.

Everard buried his face in his hands, and at the same moment heard the clattering spurs of an orderly dragoon approaching the tent. There was a knock at the canvas door.

"Come in," said the prisoner, and he saw the bright brazen helmet and high boots of the soldier at the entrance.

"Orders for you, lieutenant," said the man, respectfully, and he held out a folded paper.

Everard took it. As he had expected, it was a copy of his charges, and one of the order to hold a general court-martial, to try him for "desertion to the enemy."

He looked round for Tim Murphy. The scout was gone. In another moment he was left alone in the tent to reflect on his position.

The trial was ordered for the next day, and he had not one witness.

Tim Murphy did not come back all day, and night found him still absent.

CHAPTER XXXIV. THE PRESS-GANG.

DURING the British occupation of New York, from the very nature of its surroundings, it was much exposed to a species of predatory and partisan warfare, carried on by both sides, in boats. At first these boats had been simply used by smugglers, who found it very advantageous to run in loads of fruit, vegetables and meat to the beleaguered city, cut off as it was from all open communication with the country round by the American militia. With fresh provisions at extravagant prices in New York, while silks, teas, cotton goods and cutlery were imported there free of duty, the temptation to illicit traffic was extreme, despite of State laws and Continental military orders. The British encouraged the traffic, as it inured greatly to their advantage, and encouraged the spread of Toryism by the benefits received from Government.

But the profits of this smuggling traffic speedily grew so heavy as to entice many more into it than it could accommodate. The American officials found it demoralizing their people, and attempted to suppress it. Armed boats cruised about in the night, capturing and seizing goods in large quantities. The British, on their part, fitted out other boats to fight the Yankees, and the smugglers armed themselves.

The consequence, as might be supposed, was desperate and frequent encounters around New York, up the North and East rivers, and all the way to Long Island Sound by Oyster Bay. Landings were frequently made by the patriots, who, as all through the war, were prone to the most desperate enterprises, and not unfrequently entered the city of New York itself, in disguise, to carry off some wealthy Tory from his home.

About a week after the execution of Major Andre, on a dark night, when a fog hung over the river, and a drizzling rain from the east made every thing wet and miserable, a long, low boat stole silently out of a dense bank of fog toward the rickety docks on the east side of the city. The boat was sharp at both ends, of the kind called whale boats, very long and narrow and pulling sixteen oars, while the bow and stern were crowded with figures. The oars made no noise as they dipped in the water, for the blades were heavily muffled in strips of blanket, and the usual noise of the rowlocks was entirely absent. As silently as a dark ghost the mysterious boat moved over the face of the waters, the only sound audible being the sullen slap! slap! of the little waves against the worm-eaten timber of the docks beside which the boat was stealing. The faint web-like outline of the spars and rigging of several large ships could be seen above the low-hanging mist through the drops of rain, showing the presence of several men-of-war, but the boat, low down in the fog, was quite unseen by the Englishmen.

At last the bows of the dark-looking craft swept inward, and she pulled into an open space between two of the docks, only to be hailed by the hoarse challenge of a sentry, one of a chain that surrounded the water front of the city.

"Boat, ahoy! Who goes there?"

"Press-gang, from the Vulture," answered a low voice from the stern of the boat, with a strange Irish accent. "Now don't ye be talkin', soger dear, or they'll all hear yez, and we won't get a man to-night."

"Ye can't pass widout the counthersign," responded the sentry, with an accent equally pronounced. "One of yez come up the steps and whisper now."

The sailors in the boat tossed and shipped their oars simultaneously, and a single figure, short and sturdy, swathed in a pea-jacket, and wearing the gold-banded cap of a midshipman, ran lightly up the steps to the sentry, and whispered a word in his ear.

"Counthersign c'rect. Pass all!" said the sentry, as he shouldered his piece again.

"Come on, lieutenant; it's all right," said the Irish midshipman, beckoning. A slight-looking officer, wrapped in a sea-cloak, rose up in the stern sheets, and came forward. He gave some directions in a low voice to the men in the boat, and four of them rose up and followed him, moving slowly, as if they were burdened with

some great weight of weapons, as indeed they were, although all were hidden.

The officer had a remarkably handsome and intellectual face, and his voice had the clear, precise accents of an educated man, as he said to the sentry:

"My good fellow, we are going to a house not far from here, and when we come back we shall have several prisoners. If you're off duty before our return, tell the relief, will you, so that we may have no trouble."

"Yes, sir," said the sentry, respectfully.

He was used to having navy officers come ashore at all hours with the same mystery now observed. In those days, when Britannia ruled the waves, she found it very hard to get seamen to submit to the brutal treatment of the "officers and gentlemen," who made their boast of flogging a man every twenty-four hours. So scarce had they become, that bounties wouldn't fetch them, and the press-gang had become a standing institution, picking up men wherever they could be got, by the simple process of knocking them down with a club, and putting handcuffs on them.

Such a gang as this, to all appearance, was the one just landed, containing lieutenant, midshipman, and twenty or thirty men. When the officer and his first party of four men had got to the end of the dock, the Irish midshipman made a signal, and four more left the boat and sauntered up the dock, while he himself brought up the rear with four more, leaving about a dozen in the boat. The latter was immediately pushed out into the middle of the dock, to the end of the painter, and kept there, with the men sitting by their rowlocks, as if ready to start any minute.

The officer and his party, straggling in irregular groups, strolled along South street, from the end of the old Fly Market, near which they had landed. The midshipman gradually shifted up alongside of his officer, and whispered to the latter.

"Colonel, we're almost there. I know where to find him. He's goin' to say this blissid night, so the man tould me, and he's to mate the rest of the b'ys down at Jim Grogan's rum-cellar. It's round the next corner, sir."

"Very well, Murphy," answered the officer, in a low tone. "Take your measures as you think best. The general tells me you can be trusted. I don't know much about this kind of work."

"Well, sir," said Tim—for he it was—"if yer honor will take four men and stop here, so as to take any one that tries to run out this way, I'll go in and see if he's inside. If not, we'll have him asy as he comes down."

"Very good, Murphy," said the officer, resignedly. "Don't be long. I tell you, I've not much faith in this kind of work. You say you know Champe."

"As me own brother, liftinant," said Tim; "and, bedad, he'll know every one else in this town be this time."

And Double-Death moved off up the line of Old Slip, at the end of which was a very famous cellar, known as Jim Grogan's, a favorite place of resort for army and navy officers. Double-Death was followed by his men in detached groups, and he stationed them at the different corners of Queen street,* in such a manner as to intercept any one coming there. Then, with the cool assurance for which he was noted, he sauntered into Grogan's, in the midst of a crowd of officers filling the place with a damp, steamy atmosphere of wet cloaks and hot rum punches. The advent of a short midshipman in such a crowd of notables was entirely unnoticed, and Tim sidled about here and there at his ease, searching for the figure of the traitor Arnold. It was indeed him that they were after, these bold men who had penetrated into the heart of New York, and now were in the midst of their enemies; and the commander of the party was none other than the gallant Hamilton, Washington's adjutant-general.

It had been learned that Arnold was about to depart on an expedition to ravage the South, and a sergeant of Washington's body-guard, a man of great size and strength, named Champe, had volunteered to go into the enemy's camp, on the pretense of desertion, and do his best to kidnap Arnold.

Tim Murphy soon descried the tall form of Champe himself, surrounded by British officers, who were questioning him jeeringly about the numbers and discipline of Washington's forces. Champe kept up his character of a deserter very well, and made light of the Americans and their commander, to the high gratification of the half-intoxicated Britons.

Murphy got as close to him as he could, and caught a glance of Champe's eye that told him he was known. But nowhere could he recognize the dark, stern face of General Arnold, although there were many other general officers in the place. A scrap of conversation that he caught revealed the cause of this after a while.

"So, Philips doesn't sail to-night," said an officer of Grenadiers to one of the naval service

* Now Pearl.

standing close to him. "What's the matter, Briggs?"

"How the deuce can a man sail without wind?" responded the other. "There's not enough, while the fog lasts, to lift a pocket-handkerchief."

"I'm not sorry, for my part," said the first. "I hate to see a good officer like General Philips compelled to associate with that blackguard, Arnold. If I was Sir Henry Clinton I'd send the hound back where he came from, for his friends to deal with. Poor Andre was worth a thousand such paltry traitors as he. What has he done for us, I should like to know, after all? Nothing, but take our money, and get Andre hung, d— him."

"Well, it's no business of mine," said the second. "They don't sail to-night, and I see that the fellow keeps close in his own house."

Tim had heard all he wanted. Arnold was not coming. He sidled away from the group, and found Champe talking to a stout, red-faced man in sailor's dress, to whom he was talking in a loud voice, as if on purpose to attract attention from Murphy. The scout listened attentively.

"Yes, Mr. Barbour, your son has been tried," said Champe. "They began the trial the day I came away, and I guess he'll swing. You see, he deserted to the enemy, the same as I did, and they're going to pay off all they can on them they catch. They don't catch me, ye know."

John Barbour seemed to be perplexed and downhearted about something.

"It was all my fault, sergeant," he said, in a low voice. "The lad never meant to desert, but I enticed him away. In fact, he was a prisoner."

"Can't help that, old cock," said Champe, coldly. "He was all right so long as he didn't get taken prisoner by the Yankees. What a blasted fool he was, anyway. D'ye think I'd let myself be taken, when I know what I'd get?"

John Barbour turned away without answering, and Murphy watched him closely. A word was sufficient for the astute scout. He knew who was before him, and it came into his mind at once that here was a good substitute for Arnold, who might be made the salvation of his unfortunate friend, Everard.

Tim had not been idle in the latter's behalf all the week. He had been all the way to Bemis's Heights and back to procure evidence, and here was more, if he could secure it.

He sidled close up to Champe, and asked:

"Who's that, sergeant?"

"John Barbour, the Tory spy. Get him, if you can," he muttered.

No more words were necessary.

Murphy edged away through the crowd toward the door, keeping his eye on the burly figure of John Barbour. The latter looked sad and downcast, as he well might, after the news he had heard. With all his faults, John Barbour was devotedly fond and proud of his son, and the news of his capture and trial had cut him to the heart. He took a seat near the entrance, and made absent or gruff replies when addressed by any of his numerous friends, and at last, as if unwilling to be bothered any more, rose and went out.

Tim was after him in a moment, and followed him out. The street was quite dark, and mist and rain heavier than before, and the scout perceived the dark groups of his confederates on the opposite corners. John Barbour took his way down the slip toward the dock, walking slowly, as if in deep thought. Tim uttered a low whistle and followed him.

At the sound of that whistle the waiting groups broke up, and concentrated on the unconscious Tory till close to the dock. Then Tim stole up behind him, drew a short iron club from his pocket, clapped the other on the shoulder, and said in a low voice:

"Mr. Barbour, ye're my prisoner."

CHAPTER XXXV.

"TO SIR HENRY—QUICK!"

MISS CHARLOTTE LACY was sitting in her drawing-room in Wall street. She was not alone. Opposite to her were the dark, stern, haggard features of the traitor general, who sat in a deep arm-chair, splendid in the scarlet uniform, the price of his treason. Arnold looked moody and discontented, as he always had, but there were more than usual lines of care and vexation on his brow that evening. The young lady was knitting some fancy work.

"I don't see why you, of all people, should affect to look coldly on me, Miss Lacy," he was saying. "You were sweet enough to me a short time—"

"Pardon me, general," she interrupted, coldly; "for your wife's sake only."

"And why not be civil to me now?" he asked, irritably. "She is my wife still. What business have these people here to look at me in the way they do? What have I done to them?"

"What have you done for them?" she asked, calmly.

"I would have done much, but for the unfortunate accident of Andre's capture," said the general, irritably. "It was not my fault. Sir

Henry owned it was not, when he paid me over the stipulated sum."

"Ay, you got *that* safe," said the lady, with a faint sneer, her knitting-needles working as if she was only intent upon them.

"Of course I did," he snapped; "the same as you take your pay. You are not the person to sneer at me for that."

"General Arnold," said the little lady, in a frigid voice, "if you cannot confine your remarks to your own case, I must leave the room, or request you to do the same instead."

"Certainly, madam," he answered, standing up, his face pale with rage. "There was a time when you were glad enough to welcome me, Miss Lacy."

"You were worth something then, general," said Charlotte, in a tone of fine scorn. "You had everything to lose, and I had everything to gain. Now you have lost it, and we have found out that it was not worth the trouble we took to get it. Good-evening, general."

"Nay, you shall not treat me thus," said Arnold, in a savage tone, as he was turning away, and he stepped between her and the door as if to prevent her going.

"Who are you to despise me?" he asked. "Are you not a paid spy?"

Charlotte remained perfectly calm and contemptuous in her manner, and slowly retreated to the mantle-piece, where she took her station by the bell.

"What I am, sir, I know," she said. "A consistent loyalist, who has suffered much for her king. What you are the world knows, a traitor who has got the best of Sir Henry by a shrewd bargain, and earned fifty thousand dollars for *nothing*; who has cost us the life of one brave soldier, and whom we all despise while we use him."

While she was speaking the last words, there was a violent knock at the street-door, and Arnold started. The man lived in perpetual alarm now, and his once fierce, reckless courage seemed to have given way to nervous anxiety. Both listened to the sound of the opening door, heard a short colloquy, and then the door shut.

Arnold moved away from the entrance, as a servant knocked.

Miss Lacy moved forward, and received a letter from the man's hand.

"James," she said, "I'm glad you came. You're just in time to show General Arnold to the door. Good-evening, general."

She bowed with icy coldness, as if determined there should be no mistake, and the general, with a vindictive glance, took his hat and left the room, in a white heat of passion. Many such affronts was he destined to receive from thenceforth to the day of his miserable death.

Meanwhile, Charlotte opened the letter and read, at first half-unconsciously, presently with a full understanding of its meaning, the following:

"MADAM: This letter will reach you when I am a prisoner, and will inform you of what is far more dangerous to both our happiness. My poor Everard is a prisoner, on trial for deserting from his army two years ago, when he was a prisoner on parole in your power. Madam, I conjure you, if you have any affection for my poor boy, devise some means of rescuing him from the shameful doom of a deserter. You and I know how our poor lad was worked on, and what influences he had to struggle against. I am a willing prisoner madam, because they will admit me to testify on the court-martial, but in your hands, madam, lies the true remedy. Oh, do not let it go, but save our poor lad, madam, and earn the undying gratitude of his unhappy father! Your obedient, humble servant,

"JOHN BARBOUR."

For a moment the girl stood gazing into vacancy, with her hand pressed on her heart, as if it were bursting. Then she sprung to the bell-rope, and rung violently for the servant.

"Who brought this letter?" she demanded, with deathly-pale face and flashing eyes.

"A seafaring man, madam," said he, respectfully. "He told me he'd wait for an answer, but when I came back he was gone."

"Gone! gone, man? Why did you let him go?" almost screamed the lady, in a manner so different from her usual composure, that the servant evidently thought his mistress had gone mad on a sudden.

"I—I didn't know, madam," he stammered.

For a moment she seemed as if she would burst out upon him with a tempest of reproaches. The next, she had controlled herself.

"Order the carriage, quick!" she said. "I'm going to Sir Henry Clinton's."

In a minute the man had disappeared, and the girl hurriedly paced up and down the room, with her hands to her forehead.

"Fool, fool, fool!" she muttered. "I thought I was only playing with him, and lo! I have found I love him. Everard a prisoner; and in danger of being shot! Why did not I know this before? Oh, heavens! what have my plots come to, at last? I have killed my darling! Oh! how shall I save him? Has this accursed Arnold drawn him in, as well as poor Andre? I must save him. I will, if it costs me my own life!"

She remained pacing up and down, muttering incoherently, till the rumble of wheels was heard in the street below. Then she hastily

caught up a cloak and hood, and hurried downstairs, opening the door herself as the servant rung the bell. The night air blew chill and cold, but she heeded it not. She ran down the steps and jumped into the carriage.

"To Sir Henry's, quick!"

And away went the carriage at a rapid pace, on the way to the foot of Broadway.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ANGELS' VISITS.

EVERARD BARBOUR sat alone in his tent at night, the steady tramp of a sentry before the door showing that he was in close arrest. The lad looked haggard and unshaven, downcast and dejected. His trial had gone against him so far, and he could not get rid of the affidavit of Timothy Murphy, taken two years before. The rifleman had then sworn positively that the lieutenant had been found by him in open friendship with the enemy, and that he had refused to leave when the way was open.

From that time till he came to the posts of the American army to give himself up, he had not been seen, except by some exchanged prisoners of his own regiment, who swore that they had recognized him in New York, as the captain of a troop of Simcoe's Queen's Rangers. The time of his reporting at Philadelphia, by some mystery, was omitted, and he remained on the rolls as a *deserter*, from the time of his discovery by Double-Death, in Cherry Valley.

The only evidence taken so far had been that of the dragoons who had seen him in New York, and they had been examined at great length. Tim Murphy was not to be found, for some mysterious reason, and his testimony of two years old was regarded as sufficient. Everard was allowed to see a copy of these proceedings, and discovered, to his surprise, an important fact.

The charges and specifications against him, drawn by General Arnold in Philadelphia, had been, as he distinctly remembered, *two in number*; the first, for "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman," by its very specification proving that he had reported for duty in Philadelphia, at a time when he was said to be in New York, or elsewhere with the enemy.

The charge in these proceedings, taken in his absence, was *single*, and wholly for desertion. The reason was now plain. Arnold had been only too glad to find the dangerous knowledge of his aid-de-camp removed from his path, and had arraigned him on a charge of which he knew him to be innocent.

But how was he to prove this?

There was only one witness, besides Arnold and Charlotte Lacy and his father, who could swear positively to his being in Philadelphia on the date in question. That man was the sergeant of dragoons in his old office there. He inquired for the sergeant.

The poor sergeant was dead, killed at the battle of the Chemung, under General Sullivan, a year before.

What was he to do now?

He could only wait, protracting the cross-examination of witnesses from day to day, without indicating the line of his defense, till the time came.

The time had come at last.

He was notified that on the next day he would have to open his defense and summon his witnesses, and the poor lad felt very down-hearted about it. He had nothing but his own unsupported word to offer. Tim Murphy had not returned, and he knew not where he could be. Only a vague feeling of hope arose in his mind from that very circumstance, for he knew the scout would not have dared to be absent without leave from *superior authority*.

That evening, as he was sitting pondering, a knock came at the tent door. Full of excitement, expecting Tim had come back at last, he jumped up and threw open the flap. He almost dropped on the earth with astonishment, as he was met by the pale face of Marian Neilson!

Marian Neilson it was, no longer healthy and rosy as of yore, but pale and thin, careworn and sad in appearance. But her eyes beamed with the old light as she looked on Everard, and the youth exclaimed:

"Oh! thank God, Marian! I shall see you before I die."

The girl shuddered.

"Die, Everard! What for?"

"Oh! Marian, they have brought a deep plot against me. They said that you had married an Indian, the chief Black Eagle, and they enticed me away from Philadelphia, and carried me off to sea, and then kept me in the midst of the red-coats, while I was reported a deserter, and I only a prisoner."

"And the beautiful girl you were to marry?" asked Marian, in a low voice. "Is she here, too?"

"Whom do you mean?" asked Everard, blushing scarlet.

"I do not know," she said, simply. "I never saw her, but Tim said she was very beautiful, and I know I'm not, Everard, and so I suppose you were right to leave poor Marian, dear. Your father always said we were beneath you in family, you know."

"Marian, as God is my judge," said Everard, solemnly, "I have been faithful to you, even

when I believed you false. You are my only love yet."

"Do you truly mean that, Everard?"

The girl's eyes filled with tears as she asked. She was a gentle, quiet thing, and not prone to show much emotion.

"As God hears me, I love you, and you only, Marian," he answered, taking her hand.

"Then I am very happy, Everard," she answered, and began to cry to prove it.

"But you, Marian? How came you here?" asked Everard presently. "Who came with you, and why did you come?"

"I came because Mr. Murphy came and told us of your danger, dear," she said. "And mother and Black Eagle came with me."

"Who?" asked Everard, starting back, an angry, jealous frown on his brow. "Whom said you?"

"Mother and Black Eagle," said Marian, quietly. "Why, did you not know that the chief has been baptized? He has kept us from harm ever since we nursed him out of the danger of death, two years since, and he was made a Christian a little while ago."

"I know nothing," said Everard, a little sulkily. "Tell me all about it, please."

And then she told him how Queen Esther had carried her off from Bemis's Heights, and how Double-Death had rescued her, shooting Black Eagle through the body, and nearly getting throttled, in spite of all, by the fierce chief.

"And Murphy was so much worked up that he wanted to kill the chief," she continued; "but I wouldn't allow him, when the poor creature lay so quiet and helpless there. So we staid in the woods with him, nursing and tending him, till he began to get better, and then he came home with us, protecting us in his turn from all other Indians on the way. And oh! Everard, they say Indians are not grateful, but I tell you the chief is gratitude itself. Brother could not be more devoted, affectionate, and respectful, than he is to me; and he has taken *such* care of mother on the way."

Everard mused, and said:

"He may be able to save my life. If he will tell the truth he will know why I could not escape from the Glen of Sheshequin. It was because I was on parole to him and Queen Esther and Miss—"

"Miss who, Everard?" asked Marian, innocently.

"I must not tell," he said. "I have given my word of honor never to reveal what has passed between us to mortal. I can not break it, even for you, Marian."

"I do not ask you," she said, simply. "You never told me a lie, and I can trust you fully. Shall I call in mother and the chief? You can see if he knows anything to benefit you. We are all here together, under pass of dear General Washington, to see you whenever we want."

"And where is your father?" asked Everard.

"He is at home," she said, with a faint smile. "Ever since the time he was tied to the tree by that wicked Queen Esther's people, he has been afraid to leave home. Poor father! It was two days before they found and let him out."

"Well, then, bring them in," said Everard. "I shall be very glad to see your mother."

"And Black Eagle, too," she said, brightly. "Indeed you'll like him now. He is a noble creature."

"I hope so," said Everard, coldly. He was still very jealous of the chief, and did not wish to think too well of him.

"Come in, chief, come in, mother!" cried Marian.

And then the gigantic form of Black Eagle entered the tent, and the chief stooped his lofty plume in a grave salute to Everard.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE MYSTERIOUS BOAT.

ON that same evening, the long whale-boat which had carried Hamilton and Murphy to their daring expedition into New York, was pulling rapidly away from the dock down the river toward Governor's Island.

John Barbour sat in the stern unconfined, talking to Hamilton.

"Indeed, colonel," he said, "your arrival was a God-send to me, for though our opinions differ, I can not let my son be shot when I know his innocence. I am most grateful to you, sir, for your kindness in permitting me to write to the lady, and I can answer for it that you shall not repent your generosity. I never thought I should feel so grateful toward a reb—I mean, a gentleman of your opinions."

"The accident is happy, sir," said the colonel, courteously. "We came on an errand of of retribution, but I am glad that it has changed into one of mercy. But you say nothing of your own fate, sir. Are you aware of your position?"

"I know it well, sir," said John Barbour, gravely. "I have kept my life in my hands too long to fear to lose it. But I trust I shall be allowed to testify in my son's behalf before my trial, if I am indeed tried for a spy."

"I will answer for that," said Hamilton, warmly. "I never thought, sir, that I should feel so much respect for a man in your position."

John Barbour bowed gravely. He had made not the slightest resistance since his capture, only asking permission to write the note which he had sent to the house of Charlotte Lacy by no less a hand than that of Tim Murphy.

The boat skimmed swiftly through the fog, the strong ebb-tide carrying her below the Battery in a very short time, when they shaped their course toward the desolate flats of Jersey between Paulus Hook and the village of Bull's Ferry, keeping well in the middle of the stream to avoid the guard-boats that prowled along either shore.

The pull up the North river was long and wearying, the same tide that had carried them down being equally strong to prevent their ascent. The men settled to their work, and the oars were double manned, so that they progressed steadily up the river till the ruins of Fort Washington* were passed and they headed toward those of Fort Lee.

It was while here, heading so as to pass the Block-house at Bull's Ferry, and land on the unoccupied ground above, that the sound of oars in rapid pursuit from the city behind them struck on their ears, and in a few moments it became plain that some one was after them. The night was too dark and misty for anything to be clearly distinguished beyond the dark loom of the banks and a few faint, half-drowned lights here and there.

"Get your arms ready, lads, and hold water," said Hamilton, in a low voice. "We may have to fight."

The men hastily unbuttoned their pea-jackets, and left them loose, so as to have their pistols ready, while still protected from the rain. The sound of oars behind them increased rapidly. It was evident that the pursuing boat was in no fear of detection, for the thunder of the tholes in the rowlocks and the splash of the broad blades was incessant, telling of a strongly-manned boat. As the Americans simply maintained their position, and their oars were muffled, it was probable that they had not yet been seen or heard.

Who was in the following boat was therefore a mystery.

Presently they saw it looming through the gloom some distance on the port beam, a boat much larger than their own, crammed with men, and pulling nearly thirty oars. In the middle of the boat was the outline of a horse, and the whole craft moved by them with surprising rapidity, going as it was against current and tide.

Not a word was spoken by the Americans till the other boat was out of sight, pulling directly toward where they were going to land themselves. Then Colonel Hamilton gave the order in a low voice:

"Pull, men, but pull silently. Keep your arms ready."

The Americans stretched to their oars, following the sound of the dashing sweeps of the strange boat, but in spite of their efforts the sound became fainter and fainter, the other boat leaving them fast as the dark line of the Palisades frowned higher and higher before them. At last it went almost out of hearing. The whale-boat pulled steadily on for near an hour more, when the dark cliffs that indicated their landing-place, rose before their sight. Just as they were within two cable-lengths of the shore they again heard the thunder of oars, and the great boat came shooting down upon them from the shore with all the augmented speed given by favoring tide and current. It passed close to them on the outside, but no notice was taken of them as it swept by into the darkness. But they could see one thing plain enough.

The horse was gone.

It had evidently been landed, and the strangers not seeing them in the shadow of the Palisades, had returned to New York.

"Give way, boys," said the colonel, earnestly. "They've landed a spy of some sort, and we may catch him."

The men bent to their oars with a will, and in a few moments the boat's nose grated on the sandy beach. Even in the darkness the plain prints of a horse's hoofs could be traced on the white sand leading up to an old dirt road that climbed the hills toward Morristown.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE COURT-MARTIAL.

THE court-martial for the trial of Everard Barbour, on the charge of desertion to the enemy, met at twelve o'clock, in a large room in the house in which the General-in-chief had his head-quarters. The officers were gathered around a table, the Judge Advocate having a second and separate one to himself. The prisoner sat at a short distance off, and near him was the Indian chief, Black Eagle, in the full regalia of a chief of his tribe, but entirely unarmed, and holding the gayly-plumed calumet in his hand.

Everard was rising to address the court.

"Gentlemen of the court," said the young officer, with modest dignity, "I am aware that I stand here in a very perilous position,

with little but my own word to shield me from the punishment I should deserve, were I a deserter. I can only trust to that and my innocence to support me, for, alas! my principal witnesses are within the enemy's lines. Honest soldiers have sworn that they saw me there in the dress of the enemy, a plain deserter. Another has sworn that I refused to escape with him from the Genesee valley, and remained with the enemy. Gentlemen, the ranger spoke truth. I did refuse to leave the valley that night, but, it was because I was *under parole*. If I had not been, Murphy would never have reached me, for Indians are not wont to keep their prisoners slackly."

"Can you *prove* that you were under parole on that occasion, Mr. Barbour?" asked the president of the court, a large, handsome man in general's uniform. "Remember that your word alone has little weight in a matter where it is so obviously your interest to say as you do."

"I can prove it by the testimony of Black Eagle, chief of the Senecas," said Everard. "Is there any objection to his testimony?"

"None in a military court," replied the president. "We are not bound by the rules of State courts. Let the chief be sworn."

"He's an Indian, general," suggested one of the young officers. "He can't be sworn on a Bible he doesn't believe."

"If the court will question him," said Everard, respectfully, "they will find that the chief is a Christian."

"That alters the case," said the Judge Advocate. "I will question him. Chief, stand up."

Black Eagle, who had remained gravely impassive during the colloquy, rose to his feet, and displayed his magnificent proportions at the foot of the table, saying in his deep, powerful voice:

"Black Eagle is here. He speaks with a straight tongue. Let the white chiefs question him. He will answer."

"Are you a Christian or not, chief?" asked the Judge Advocate.

"The good father who tells the red-man the words of the Great Spirit, poured the holy water on the head of Black Eagle," said the chief, gravely. "He told me that the Great Spirit gave me a new heart, to forgive my enemies, and slay no more. The heart of Black Eagle has become as a little child, and he takes no more scalps."

"Do you know the nature of an oath?" asked the officer.

The chief's lip curled with disdain, as he said:

"Black Eagle does not swear. But whites swear, and call the Great Spirit names, as if he were a dog like them. He will punish them, when the graves return the Red and White to the face of the Master of Life."

The officers looked at one another, as if half ashamed. The vice of swearing was fearfully prevalent among all there, and the childlike rebuke of the simple chief abashed them.

"You do not understand me, chief," said the officer, gently, after a pause. "If you were to swear before the Great Spirit to tell the truth, and were to lie, do you know what would happen to you?"

"Black Eagle would never go to the happy hunting-grounds where his fathers roam under the smile of the Master of Life," said the chief, gravely. "But his tongue was never forked. Cowards lie, and Black Eagle is a chief of the Senecas. Double-Death knows if he is a coward."

"I think you had better examine the chief without further formality, Captain Randolph," said the president. "I'm inclined to believe he's a better man than many a white gentleman. I'll take the responsibility. Consider him sworn."

"Very good, general," said the officer. "Chief, do you know this officer?" He indicated Everard as he spoke.

"Know little chief very well," said Black Eagle, with a smile. "Little chief give heap of trouble down in Pocono.* Kill five warriors before Black Eagle take him, up in a tree. Warriors say, scalp him. Black Eagle say, no. Little chief fight too well. Thayendanegea (Brant) tell Black Eagle not to scalp prisoners. Black Eagle take little chief all the way to the Sheshequin."

"Then you mean to say that you took him prisoner at Wyoming, and carried him to Sheshequin?" asked Randolph, inquiringly.

"Yes," said the chief, laconically.

"And how long was he prisoner there?"

"Till the Queen of Sheshequin and Black Eagle went on the war-path again. Then Black Eagle spoke to the Spy Queen, and said—"

"There, there, there. Never mind the Spy Queen, whoever she is. How long was this officer a prisoner?" said Randolph, irritably. The picturesque phraseology of the chief puzzled him.

"Till ten suns had risen and set," said Black Eagle.

"And then what became of him?"

"We gave him to the Spy Queen to keep."

"And who is the Spy Queen?"

"Little squaw chief, who bring presents from the Great Father over the water. The Six Nations obey her voice."

"I have heard of this woman before," said the president. "She seems to be the Indian agent of the English king. What had she to do with the prisoner, chief?"

Black Eagle looked puzzled.

"I mean, had she any authority to take him from you?"

"Yes," said the chief, promptly. "Great paper, much big, big green seal of Great Father over the water. Take any thing. Seneca say yes."

"And you gave him up to her? Did you make him promise any thing?"

"No," said Black Eagle. "Give him to Spy Queen. That all."

"That will do," said the president, gravely. "Mr. Barbour, have you any questions to ask?"

He looked a little disappointed, for he had expected to find Everard's words corroborated by the chief, and he sympathized with the former.

"Black Eagle," said Everard, in a shaking voice, "you say I made no promise to you. Did you know of my making any to any one else, when I was left without a guard?"

The chief looked thoughtful.

"The mind of Black Eagle is dark," he said, finally. "He cannot say to whom you promised."

"Do you know *what* I promised?" asked Everard, eagerly.

"Little chief promised not to run away, if the Senecas did not tie his hands and feet," said the chief, promptly.

The young officer gave a low sigh of relief.

"That is all I have to offer on that point, general," he said. "You see I was under parole." And he sat down.

"May it please the court," said Captain Randolph, rising, "the prosecution submits that that is not enough. The prisoner has not proved that he was under parole to a recognized officer of the enemy. We do not wish to be hard on him, but such a weak defense for being found in the enemy's lines I never heard. If he has nothing more to offer, I move for judgment on the charge and specifications."

"I am not quite through," said Everard, sadly. "For what follows I have nothing but my own word to offer, to-day. Heaven may send the witness in time. Gentlemen, the day after Murphy, the ranger, left Sheshequin, I was released from my parole and escaped to Philadelphia. I am not at liberty to say how I was released, but I escaped and reported to General Arnold in Philadelphia, where I was seen by him and his wife—then Miss Shippen—and by a sergeant of my regiment who was in the adjutant's office, but who was killed last year with General Sullivan, at the Chemung. That very night, while copying papers for the general, I came across one of the letters from Major Andre to him, signed *John Anderson*, and a return of all our forces addressed to Sir Henry Clinton by his initials. While examining these and hardly believing my eyes, I was surprised by the general, who displayed great indignation, and ordered me to my room under arrest. Gentlemen, I was confused. You know how reluctant you all were to believe a brave soldier like General Arnold guilty of treason, and in my confusion I had surrendered into his hands the papers, so that I had no proof that my suspicions were true. While in this wavering state of mind I was served with charges in his own handwriting. The *second* charge was the same under which proceedings were afterward taken, which you have here. The *first* was for conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman in examining his papers, and that charge and specification, gentlemen, will prove to you that I must have been in Philadelphia on that night. That charge, gentlemen, in Arnold's writing, I have concealed next to me ever since, and here it is."

As he spoke he drew from his vest the soiled and worn paper containing those charges, which he had surreptitiously preserved for two years. It produced a manifest effect in court.

A hush had fallen on the officers composing it, during the novel revelation made by our hero, and when he had finished, the paper was carefully examined by all present, and various muttered comments made upon it.

"Mr. Barbour," said the president, gravely, "as officers and gentlemen we may believe the truth of your statement, when as members of this court we are obliged to ask for more proof. It seems that all the witnesses to the fact of your being in Philadelphia are in the enemy's lines, and although the fact of those charges being in the handwriting of the traitor may explain much, it proves little. The statement is not sworn to, and Arnold is not here to be cross-examined."

"I wish he was, general," said Everard innocently.

"I echo the sentiment with all my heart," said the general, with emphasis. "If ever we catch him— But to your case, sir. How do you account for being in New York, even admitting that you were in Philadelphia?"

* Called Fort Knyphausen by the British after the Fennish general of that name.

* Pocono. Indian name for Wyoming.

"That very night, sir," said Everard, in a low tone, "while still confused and uncertain what to do, I was visited by—my father."

"Indeed!" said the president; "and where is he now?"

"In the enemy's lines, sir," said Everard, still lower. "He is a Tory, and a secret agent of the enemy."

There was another hush. It was a hush of compassion for the son telling of his own father's disgrace.

"Go on, sir," said the president. "What happened?"

"My father," said Everard, "had been in correspondence and communication with Arnold for a long time, and knew him well, as he was. He pressed me to break my arrest and come with him to General Washington to state the truth of the case, and save my future career. Uncertain as I was if my general was not a traitor, I rashly broke arrest and fled with my father, believing fully that I was going up the river, toward Morristown. Instead of that I found that I was deceived when it was too late, and was out at sea. I was a prisoner on board a smuggler owned by Arnold and my father conjointly, and commanded by the latter. I found that I was trapped, and must soon be landed in New York. My father, an obstinate loyalist, had been endeavoring to win me to his side since the war began. Now he exulted in his work. Gentlemen, I can not blame him. He was as fully in earnest as I was. I saw that I was lost. If I landed in New York a prisoner, I was still liable to be held a deserter, absent without leave. I had broken arrest. A traitor had put me under the arrest, truly. All the same, I had no proofs. I resolved to get those proofs at any hazard, and to that end joined the Queen's Rangers, pretending to desert. I got the proofs, sent them to General Washington. Arnold was detected and Andre captured, the plot averted and West Point saved by my means, and now, gentlemen, act your pleasure. General Washington knows the last part of my story to be true. I have no proofs of the rest but my own word, now."

When Everard had finished, there was a whispered consultation among the members of the court. It was disturbed by a confused noise outside the windows, and Everard, who stood close to one, involuntarily glanced down. He saw a magnificent thoroughbred horse standing trembling before the door, ready to fall, while the slight, delicate figure of a lady in a blue riding-habit was just springing off and running to the entrance door. He saw the sentry on duty cross his musket before her as if to forbid entrance, while a crowd of curious soldiers stood laughing by.

Then on a sudden they all shrunk back, as the majestic form of the general-in-chief appeared on the steps, as if to inquire what was the matter. Washington spoke a few words to the sentry, and then advanced, with the stately courtesy which always distinguished him, offering his arm to the lady, to conduct her into the house.

Everard was recalled from the brief glimpse of this little drama by the voice of the president, who was saying:

"Mr. Barbour, have you nothing else to say in your defense, and no more witnesses to offer?"

"If I could offer my father, I might say 'yes,'" returned Everard. "But of what avail is it? Father cannot testify for son, and if he could, how could I get him?"

"In consideration of the hardship of your case," said the president, "we have about concluded, Mr. Barbour, to request the Commander-in-chief to send in a flag to New York, bearing a safe conduct for your father. Courts-martial are subject to no rules of evidence, such as obtain in criminal courts, and we are competent to judge of the credibility of testimony. If such is your desire, Mr. Barbour, we will send in now to ask the favor."

"General," said Everard, his eyes filling with tears, "you are too kind to me. I accept the offer with gratitude."

"Captain Randolph, give our compliments to General Washington, and make the request," said the president, kindly.

The Judge Advocate bowed and left the room.

When he was gone a silence fell on the party. Everard was in cruel suspense as to whether the request would be granted. It seemed an age to him ere he heard the returning footsteps of Randolph, who had really been absent about ten minutes.

The Judge Advocate came briskly back and threw open the door wide. Other footsteps were heard behind him, the slow, stately tread of a man with riding boots and clattering spurs, and the light, hurrying footsteps of a girl. Captain Randolph announced, in a loud voice:

"Gentlemen, the Commander-in-chief, and a new witness."

Everard uttered a cry of mingled surprise and incredulity as he beheld the towering form of Washington, and leaning on his arm the well-known figure of Charlotte Lacy.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE WITNESSES.

THE whole of the court-martial rose at the announcement, and the members respectfully saluted the general.

"Gentlemen," said Washington, "you all know that it is not my custom in general to interfere with the proceedings of courts-martial. In the case now on trial, I have an extraordinary reason for the seeming breach of etiquette. The lady by my side has ridden all the way from Fort Lee, at full speed, putting herself absolutely in our power, for no other purpose than to testify on behalf of the young officer you are trying. Gentlemen, I have heard the story, and I believe that when you have heard it, you will acquit Mr. Barbour of desertion two years ago. As for his residence in New York, that has been fully accounted for by the great service and important intelligence he was the means of furnishing us, in consequence of the opportunities afforded him by his pretended position in the enemy's forces. Gentlemen, allow me to introduce to you Miss Charlotte Lacy, Chief of the British Secret Service in America, who has given herself up into our hands, to perform an act of justice."

The officers had listened in bewildered astonishment to the general's address, and when he had concluded, bowed low before the extreme beauty and grace of Charlotte herself.

The girl was very pale, but the perfect contour of her face, the bright gold of her hair, and the depth of her large blue eyes, were overpowering yet. She was dressed in a blue riding-dress, a broad hat and ostrich feather, damp with last night's mist, hanging at the back of her shapely head.

She advanced to the table, and in a low, sweet voice, addressed the court.

"Gentlemen, you are surprised to see me here, and hear my name. I have done you many injuries ere this, and lived as a spy in the midst of your camps, to send intelligence to my own side. I am a bitter loyalist, gentlemen, and have served my king faithfully against you, using any and every means to harm you and benefit him. But no one among you have I injured so much as I have that young officer, Everard Barbour."

Her voice trembled, and she broke down an instant.

"It was I, gentlemen," she pursued, "who made the first approaches to the dastard traitor, Arnold, whom we despise as much as you do, now. It was I who strove hard to corrupt Mr. Barbour, a young lieutenant on his staff. I tried hard, gentlemen, but let me tell you that I failed, with all my arts, to shake his allegiance to America. Bethink you, gentlemen, he had not one friend with him, his own father was against him, and all his relations were loyalists. With so many temptations to fall, is it not a marvel that he stood at all? But he did, and kept his honor unsullied through all. He refused to escape from Sheshequin, it is true, because he had given me his parole not to escape. I gave it back to him. He escaped at once, and went to Philadelphia. Again I tempted him. Again he would not yield. His honor as a gentleman would not let him betray me, but he stood fast for his country. His father too, he could not betray. We surrounded and besieged him night and day, and still he yielded not. He found out something of the treason of his general, and the latter took the alarm in time and arrested him. I arranged the whole plot with General Arnold, myself, and he was carried to New York by a trick. Well, gentlemen, even then, when every one else thought him a deserter, his father and I knew different. We kept him in the city at the depot of the Queen's Rangers on purpose that he might not escape. We dared not let Sir Henry Clinton know him as he was, for we both loved and feared for our boy, and hoped to win him over to the king's cause yet. But he escaped our vigilance at last, and returned to his duty at once. Gentlemen, have me shot, and release him. I am the Spy Queen, and I am in your power; but he is as innocent as a child."

Her statement made a profound impression on every one. The general-in-chief himself stood silently by, watching its effect, and noticed the many kind glances thrown at the prisoner. He now interposed, and handed Charlotte to a seat, when he spoke himself:

"I come as a volunteer witness here, gentlemen. I cannot send in the flag you request, because it is now unnecessary. I have just received a dispatch from Colonel Hamilton, to say that he will be here in a few minutes with Mr. John Barbour himself."

There was a great murmur of surprise, and none were more amazed than Everard.

"Colonel Hamilton, at my request, accompanied Timothy Murphy, the scout, to New York, last night," pursued the commander. "They went on a desperate and dangerous quest to find and kidnap the traitor, General Arnold. They failed in that, but they found means to capture Mr. John Barbour himself, who came willingly enough when he heard of his son's trial. Gentlemen, I shall await your report when you have examined them, and I need not say that

I trust it will be a merciful one to the faults of our young friend, traceable as all are, to a single error of judgment. Madam, if you will accept my arm, Mrs. Washington will be happy to see you." And with the majestic grace peculiar to himself, the great commander escorted Charlotte from the room, relieving her of the embarrassment of being among so many men alone, with his usual delicacy.

Their steps had hardly died away, and the buzz of excited conversation among the members of the court was hardly over, when the clatter of boots was heard on the stairs, and Tim Murphy burst into the room, waving the sham midshipman's cap, totally regardless of military etiquette, and quite unabashed by the presence of so many generals and other officers.

"Hurroo, liftinant, darlin'!" he yelled, with a true Irish whoop. "Hurroo! Erin go bragh! We've found the ould man, and he's comin' upstairs wid the colonel and Miss Marian, and it's all right, and ye won't be kilt, and it's Tim Murphy's the b'y'll dance at yer widdin' yet. Hurroo! Black Aigle, ye ould thafe, give me yer fist, ould boy. Bedad, I b'lave I'm crazy, darlin'."

And so it seemed.

Never was a court-martial broken up in such undignified haste as this one, now that its members were satisfied of the truth of Everard's story. Before sunset he was restored to liberty, and the story of his wrongs flew like wildfire all over the camp.

From a traitor he had become a hero.

CHAPTER XL.

THE END.

SOME days afterward a group of people on horseback were gathered on the summit of the road that led down to Fort Lee and the river. In the center of the group, white-frocked and picturesque, a mounted rifleman held aloft a long lance, from the summit of which fluttered the white folds of a flag of truce. Below them, and close to the shore was a large boat with the English ensign in the stern, and a corresponding flag of truce at the bow. Charlotte Lacy and John Barbour were near together in the group, and Marian and Everard were conversing earnestly with them.

Everard was once more handsomely equipped as a dragoon officer, and the double epaulettes of a captain glittered on his shoulders, while a party of dragoons in the rear indicated that he was restored to his old comrades.

Marian and Charlotte had their hands clasped:

"You believe all I have said, Marian, do you not?" said the beautiful Spy Queen, earnestly. "Believe me, dear, if I had known you as I do now, so good and gentle, Charlotte would never have given you the pain she has. You may well be proud of your Everard, Marian. He has been true to you under all the temptations man could undergo. He has forgiven me now. Do you forgive me Marian?"

"Indeed I do, Charlotte," returned the girl. "Oh! when will this cruel war be ended, when we can be friends together at last? You have been so good to us now, when I know what cause you have to hate me."

"I shall never hate any one again, Marian," said Charlotte, musingly. "I have been accustomed to think of the Continentals as rebels and murderers, and I have served the king faithfully against them, but since I have seen your chief face to face I have learned what true nobility is. From henceforth I become a simple lady again, and when the war is over, dear, perhaps before, you shall see Charlotte again, and perhaps you'll let her be called aunt Charlotte then."

The last words were spoken with a smile in a low voice, and Marian blushed violently.

"Nay, never be ashamed to love your husband," whispered Charlotte. "He will be a good one to you. He has been a good son in spite of the difference of opinion between him and his father, or Mr. Barbour would never have consented to your marriage."

At this moment a gun was fired from the boat below, and the white flag waved impatiently.

"We must be going, Everard," said John Barbour, sadly. "Good-by, my boy, and take care of your wife. Since you won't come over to our side, why we must wait till the war's over before we meet again. I serve no more as a secret agent. I'm sick of it. I shall apply for a commission, and fight you Whigs honestly in the field in future. Then I shall not feel humiliated by the undeserved kindness of your general in granting me a safe-conduct, when I might fairly have been hung as a spy. Farewell, Marian. God bless you, my girl. I never thought to do what I have, but your general is like a demigod. There is no resisting his wishes. Good-by till the war's over. Good-by, Murphy."

"Heaven save ye kindly, Mr. Barbour," said Tim, respectfully. "Av we ever mate in the

field again, bedad, I'll kape me bullets for some one else, for ye're a dacent gintleman, so ye are. Good-by, sir."

"And where is Black Eagle?" asked Charlotte, as she turned her horse's head down-hill. "I should like to bid him good-by."

"Black Eagle is here," said the deep voice of the Indian, as he rose from the shadow of a thicket by the roadside and came forward. "The Great Spirit be good to the Spy Queen and keep her from her enemies."

"Farewell, chief," said Charlotte. "The Spy Queen will never be seen again. She ceases to be, from this day."

"It is good," said the Indian, gravely. "Spies and forked tongues are bad in the eyes of the Great Spirit. Let my sister be only the blue Star-flower of the pale-faces. It suits her better. Farewell."

A second gun from the boat and a second waving of the flag announced that the English sailors were impatient.

The little party separated reluctantly, and Tim rode down the hill to bring back the horses when the two English agents should have taken the boat.

With that lavish generosity toward Everard, which always had distinguished her, Charlotte had insisted on his accepting the deed of her Philadelphia house as his wedding gift, besides the horse on which she had ridden on her errand of mercy to save him. His own horse, which he had turned loose when he had made his escape with the Skinners, had been found and returned to him, and his marriage had found him much better provided with this world's goods than he had ever before been.

They remained at the top of the hill watching till their friends were safely embarked, and Tim Murphy was slowly returning.

"Poor Charlotte," said Marian, pressing closer to her husband as the boat skimmed away. "How should I have felt had I lost you? Everard, she loves you."

Everard made no answer. He was watching Black Eagle, who, leaning on the muzzle of his rifle, his back turned to them, was gazing mournfully at the distant city of New York. Everard silently pointed him out to his wife.

"What think you of, chief?" asked Marian, gently.

Black Eagle looked up, his face gloomy and mournful, as he answered:

"The Star-flower has lost the Little Chief, but she goes to her people. They will console her, and the Star-flower will be happy. Black Eagle has lost the White Flower, but he has no people to go to. Annatakaules* has laid low the towns of the Six Nations, and the smiling field has become the desolate waste. Black Eagle has no people to go to."

"Then let ours be yours, chief," said Marian, kindly. "Indeed, we love you well, and you may be happy yet. I will get you a wife myself."

Black Eagle shook his head.

"It is too late," he said. "The Great Spirit has said we are to fade like the leaves and we obey. He has told Black Eagle to forgive his foes and the chief has done so. But the ways of the Great Spirit are hard to understand."

"Leave him alone," whispered Everard to his wife. "He is sad and moody, and soothing only deepens his gloom. Men are best left alone in sorrow, especially Indians."

They turned their horses away, and rejoined their party, leaving the gloomy chief watching the distant boat.

Tim Murphy rejoined them on the road, having disposed of his horses, and expressed himself as well satisfied with the day's work.

"God save us all, liftin'ant—I mane captain," said the worthy scout, philosophically; "'tis a square worrld sometimes, but av a man sticks to his colors, bedad he'll come out safe at last. Now, there was the purty little Spy Queen and the ould gintleman and all together ag'in' yez, and they tangled ye up in their divilments till even Tim Murphy was fool enough to think ye a traitor, but, after all, things came straight at last, and now ye've a foine house and a purty wife and lashins o' horses and money galore, and bedad, av we don't get blind drunk to-night over it 'twill be becase there's no poteen in camp."

"Nay, Murphy," said Marian, smiling. "'tis a poor way to celebrate a feast to degrade oneself to a brute. If you had not been sober a long time we should never have been saved from ruin as Everard was by the skill and daring of DOUBLE-DEATH, THE SCOUT."

* Annatakaules. The Indians gave this name (The Town-Destroyer) to Washington after the terrible retribution visited on them by his order in 1779, during Sullivan's expedition after the battle of Chemung. Houses, lodges, crops and orchards were ruthlessly destroyed, and the smiling valley of the Genesee turned into a howling wilderness.

THE END.

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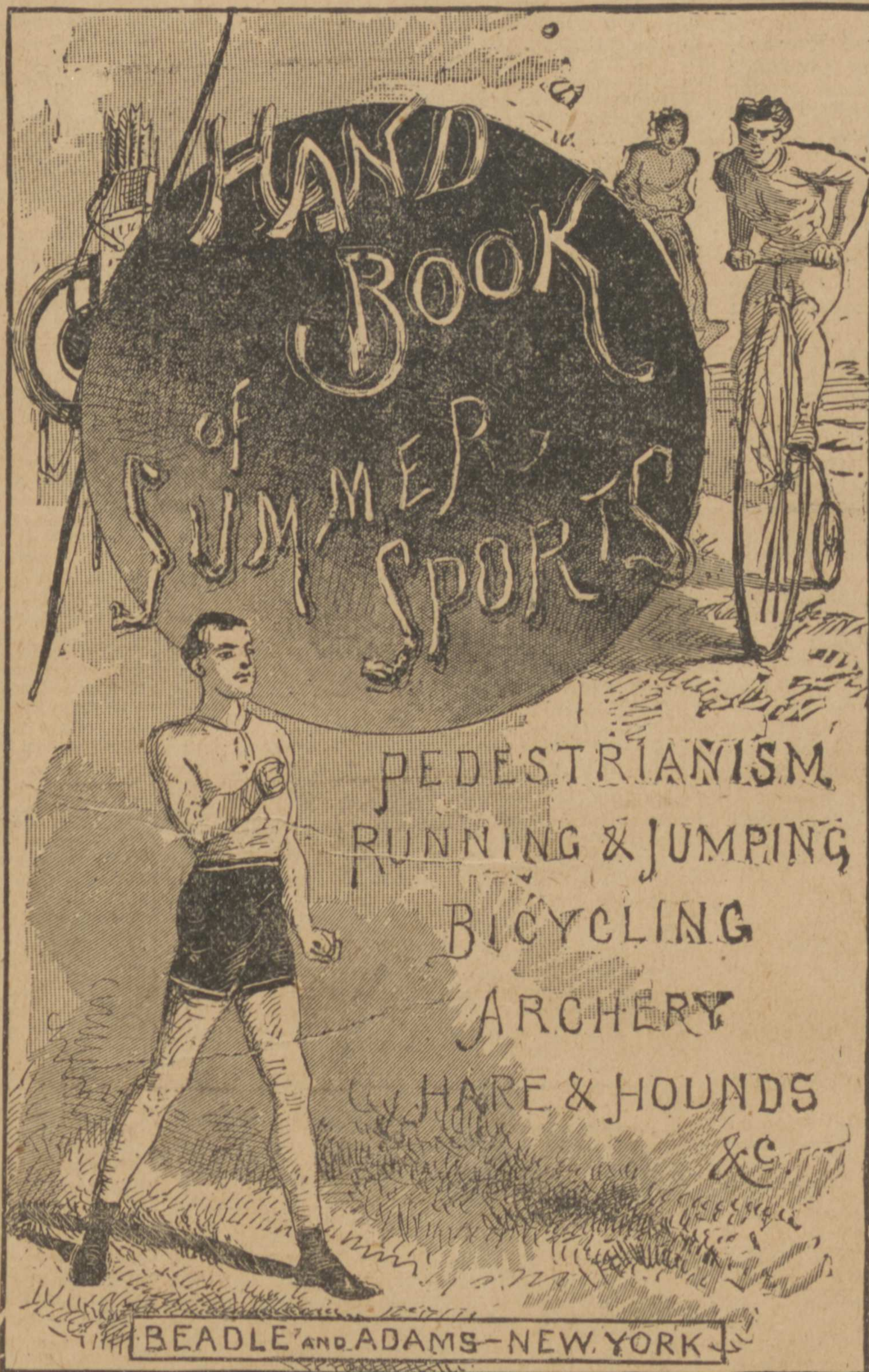
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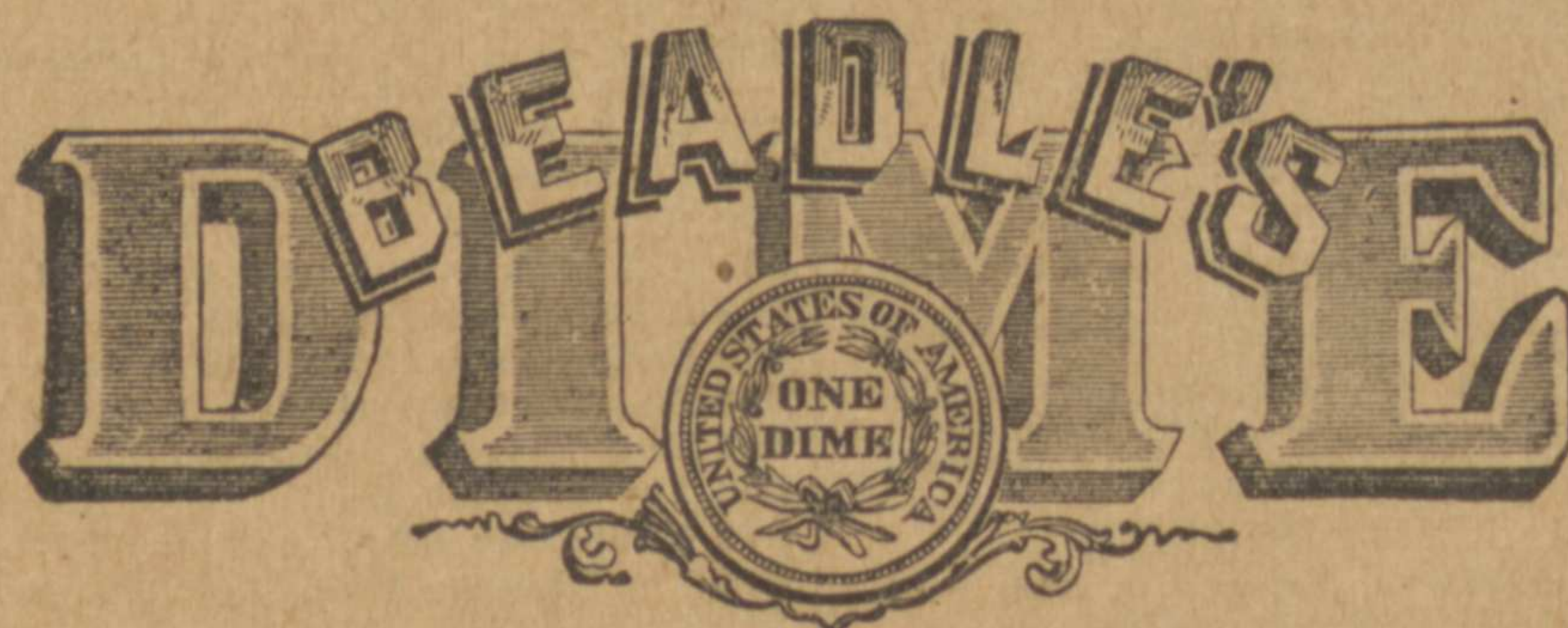


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661 The Get-There Sharp.
651 Silver-Tip St-ve, the Sky Scrapper from Siskiyou.
645 Gopher Gabe, the Unseen Detective.
636 Dandy Darling, Detective.
627 Mossback Mose, the Mountaineer.
617 The Grip Sack Sharp's Even up.
597 Big Bandy, the Brigadier of Brimstone Butte.
588 Sandy Sands, the Sharp from Snap City.
576 Silver-Tongued Sid; or, Grip Sack Sharp's Sweep.
564 The Grip-Sack Sharp; or, The Seraphs of Sodom.
555 Grip-Sack Sid, the Sample Sport.
547 The Buried Detective; or, Sa-l's Six Sensations.
541 Major Magnet, the Man of Nerve.
535 Dandy Dutch, the Decorator from Dead-Lift.
527 Dandy Andy, the Diamond Detective.
514 Gabe Guna, the Grizzly from Ginseng.
504 Solemn Saul, the Sad Man from San Saba.
495 Rattlepate Rob; or, The Roundhead's Reprisal.
488 The Thoroughbred Sport.
474 Daddy Dead-Eye, the Despot of Dew Drop.
466 Old Rough and Ready, the Sage of Sundown.
458 Dutch Dan, the Pilgrim from Spitzenberg.
443 A Cool Hand; or, Pistol Johnny's Picnic.
438 Oklahoma Nick.
433 Laughing Leo; or, Sam's Dandy Pard.
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416 Monte Jim, the Black Sheep of Bismarck.
409 Rob Roy Ranch; or, The Imps of Fan Handle.
402 The Nameless Sport.
395 Dearly Aim, the Duke of Derringers.
387 Dark Durg, the Ishmael of the Hills.
372 Captain Crisp, the Man with a Record.
367 A Royal Flush; or, Dan Brown's Big Game.
360 Jumping Jerry, the Gamecock from Sundown.
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596 Double-Voice Dan, the Go-it Alone Detective.
689 The Sparkler Sharp.
676 Hurricane Hal, the Cowboy Hotspur.
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852 The Stranger Sport's Shake-up.
828 Kirk King, the Man from Kirby.
818 Gentleman Dave, the Dead Game Sport.
783 The King-Pin Tramp.
767 The Sport of Silver Bend.
718 Uncle Bedrock's Big Bounce.
707 The Rival Rovers.
687 Double Cinch Dan, the Sport With a Charm.
677 Mr. Jackson, the Gent from Jaybird.
659 Gilt-Edge Johnny; or, Roldan and His Rovers.
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634 Old Handcart's Big Dump.
622 The All Around Sports.
603 Desert Alf, the Man With the Cougar.
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578 Seven Shot Steve, the Sport with a Smile.
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549 Belshazzar Brick, the Bailiff of Blue Blazes.
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478 Pinnacle Pete; or, The Fool from Way Back.
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429 Hair Trigger Tom of Red Bend.
402 Snapshot Sam; or, The Angels' Flat Racket.
396 The Piper Detective; or, The Gilt Edge Gang.
375 Royal George, the Three in One.
356 The Handsome Sports; or, The Combination.
333 Derringer Dick, the Man with the Drop.
268 Magic Mike, the Man of Frills.
229 Captain Custeeve; or, The Little Sport.
214 The Two Cool Sports; or, Gertie of the Gulch.
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160 Soft Hand, Sharp; or, The Man with the Sand.
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361 Tombstone Dick, the Train Pilot.
122 Saul Sabberday, the Idiot Spy.
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732 The Hurricane Detective.
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616 Magnus, the Weird Detective.
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582 Joram, the Detective Expert.
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536 Old Falcon's Foe; or, The Detective's Swell Job.
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499 Twilight Charlie, the Road Sport.
472 Gilbert of Gotham, the Steel-arm Detective.
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315 Flush Fred's Double; or, The Squatters' League.
308 Hemlock Hank, Tough and True.
298 Lagger Lem; or, Life in the Pine Woods.
289 Flush Fred's Full Hand.
274 Flush Fred, the Mississippi Sport.
248 Montana Nat, the Lion of Last Chance Camp.
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791 The Coast-Raider's Death-Chase.
748 Arizona Charlie, the Crack-shot Detective.
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685 The Red-skin Sea Rover.
679 Revello, the Pirate Cruiser; or, The Rival Rovers.
672 The Red Rapiet; or, The Sea Rover's Bride.
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635 The Ex Buccaneer; or, The Stigma of Sin.
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605 The Shadow Silver Ship.
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560 The Man from Mexico.
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493 The Scouts of the Sea.
457 The Sea Insurgent; or, The Conspirator Sea.
446 Ocean Ogre, the Outcast Corsair.
435 The One-Armed Buccaneer.
430 The Fatal Frigate; or, Rivals in Love and War.
399 The New Monte Cristo.
393 The Convict Captain.
377 Afloat and Ashore; or, The Corsair Conspirator.
369 The Coast Corsair; or, The Siren of the Sea.
364 The Sea Fugitive; or, The Queen of the Coast.
341 The Sea Desperado.
336 The Magic Ship; or, Sandy Hook Freebooters.
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318 The Indian Buccaneer; or, The Red Rovers.
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235 Red Lightning the Man of Chance.
224 Black Beard, the Buccaneer.
220 The Specter Yacht; or, A Brother's Crime.
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205 The Gambler Pirate; or, Lady of the Lagoon.
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502 Bareback Buck, the Centaur of the Plains.
472 Six Foot Si; or, The Man to "Tie To."
431 California Kit, the Always on Hand.
404 Silver Sid; or, A "Daisy" Bluff.
380 Tiger Dick's Pledge; or, The Golden Serpent.
359 Yellow Jack, the Mestizo.
338 Jack Sands, the Boss of the Town.
299 Three of a Kind; or, Dick, Despard and the Sport.
251 Tiger Dick vs. Iron Despard.
207 Old Hard Head; or, Whirlwind and his Mare.
171 Tiger Dick, the Man of the Iron Heart.
114 The Gentleman from Pike.
80 A Man of Nerve; or, Caliban the Dwarf.
54 Always on Hand; or, The Foot-Hills Sport.
29 Tiger Dick, Faro King; or, The Cashier's Crime.
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291 Horseshoe Hank, the Man of Big Luck.
285 Lightning Bolt, the Canyon Terror.
276 Texa Chick, the Southwest Detective.
271 Stonefist, of Big Nugget Bend.
266 Leopard Luke, the King of Horse-Thieves.
263 Iron-Armed Abe, the Hunchback Destroyer.
258 Bullet Head, the Colorado Bravo.
237 Long-Haired Max; or, The Black League.
227 Buckshot Ben, the Man-Hunter of Idaho.
223 Canyon Dave, the Man of the Mountain.
219 The Scorpion Brothers; or, Mad Tom's Mission.
202 Cactus Jack, the Giant Guide.
194 Don Sombbrero, the California Road Gent.
176 Lady Jaguar, the Robber Queen.

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